

Public Document Pack



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

Date: Thursday, 14th July, 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 City
Council)

Email: committeesection@southend.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

To elect a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee for the remainder of the current municipal year.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 8)

To agree the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 10 February 2022.

5. ASELA Joint Committee - Review of Governance Arrangements (Pages 9 - 24)

To consider the attached report of the Monitoring Officer of Basildon Borough Council.

6. ASELA Joint Committee - Accountable Body & Secretariat Arrangements (Pages 25 - 28)

To consider the attached report of the Interim Director of Financial Services for Southend-on-Sea City Council.

7. Association of South Essex Local Authorities - Finance Report (Pages 29 - 32)

To consider the attached report of the lead Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) for ASELA, for June 2022.

8. South Essex Estuary Park Programme - Highlight Report (Pages 33 - 36)

To consider the attached report of the respective Chief Executive/Programme Implementation Director on the progress of the ASELA South Essex Estuary Park (SEE Park) Programme.

9. Digital Programme - Highlight Report (Pages 37 - 40)

To consider the attached report of the respective Chief Executive/Programme Implementation Director on the progress of the ASELA Digital Programme.

10. Housing Programme - Highlight Report (Pages 41 - 44)

To consider the attached report of the respective Chief Executive/Programme Implementation Director on the progress of the ASELA Housing Programme.

11. Thames Freeport Programme - Highlight Report (Pages 45 - 48)

To consider the attached report of the respective Chief Executive/Programme Implementation Director on the progress of the ASELA Thames Freeport Programme.

12. South Essex Technical University Programme - Highlight Report (Pages 49 - 54)

To consider the attached report of the respective Chief Executive/Programme Implementation Director on the progress of the ASELA South Essex Technical University Programme.

13. Association of South Essex Local Authorities - Communications Report (Pages 55 - 58)

To consider the attached report of the lead Communications Officer for ASELA.

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 **4**

Date: Thursday, 10th February, 2022

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

Present: Councillors S Wootton (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)
Councillors A Baggott (Leader - Basildon Borough Council), I Gilbert (Leader - Southend-on-Sea Borough Council) and P Varker (Deputy Leader - Castle Point Borough Council)
P Glading (Opportunity South Essex (Co-opted Member))

In Attendance: I Butt (Castle Point Borough Council), L Carpenter (Chief Executive - Thurrock Borough Council), M Doran (Essex County Council), A Hutchings (Rochford District Council), A Horgan (Castle Point Borough Council), S Logan (Chief Executive - Basildon Borough Council), S Tautz (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (Secretariat)), A Wardle (ASELA Communications Lead) and L Wosko (Castle Point Borough Council)

Start/End Time: 10.00 am - 11.55 am

14 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Hossack (Chair) (Leader - Brentwood Borough Council), Councillor K Bentley (Leader – Essex County Council), M Coxshall (Cabinet Member - Thurrock Borough Council), A Sheldon (Leader - Castle Point Borough Council) (Substitute: Councillor P Varker), G Jones (Chief Executive - Essex County Council), A Lewis (Chief Executive - Southend-on-Sea Borough Council) and J Stephenson (Joint Chief Executive - Brentwood Borough Council and Rochford District Council).

15 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

16 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 October 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

17 Lower Thames Crossing

The Joint Committee received a presentation from M Palmer, Executive Director (Lower Thames Crossing) of Highways England, with regard to the current

proposals for the new A122 and the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, that was designed to provide relief for the existing Dartford Crossing from 2029.

M Palmer presented an overview of the development of the Lower Thames Crossing proposal and its intended positive impact on the delivery of skills, education and employment opportunities in the region, the proposed approach of Highways England to the mitigation of the impact of the new crossing on the environment in South Essex, and the plans for the crossing to support decarbonisation through low carbon emissions during construction and to deliver appropriate upskilling across construction industries to achieve a lasting positive legacy from the project.

The Joint Committee was advised that the Lower Thames Crossing would be a significant enabler of the current ASELA key programmes, particularly in support of the ambition for Thames Freeport and the future skills requirements to be delivered by the proposed South Essex Technical University, and that it was therefore important that the respective lead Chief Executive for each programme should work closely with M Palmer/Highways England to identify and progress opportunities to support each programme that arise from the development of the proposed crossing.

It was reported that the ASELA Communications Lead would also be able to provide support for appropriate engagement and communications activity around the benefits to the ASELA key programmes arising from the planning and delivery of the new Lower Thames Crossing.

Resolved:

- (1) That the current position with regard to the new A122 and the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, be noted.
- (2) That the lead Chief Executive for each of the ASELA key programmes work with M Palmer/Highways England to identify and progress appropriate opportunities arising from the proposed Lower Thames Crossing to support the delivery of the key programmes.
- (3) That the appreciation of the Joint Committee for his attendance at the meeting, be extended to M Palmer.

18 Association of South Essex Local Authorities - Finance Report

The lead Chief Financial Officer presented a report setting out the financial position of ASELA and the key programmes for February 2022, including budgeted income and expenditure, which provided assurance in relation to the arrangements for financial management and reporting in respect of the budget for 2021/22.

The Joint Committee was advised that the finance report now provided detail of the additional funding provided by the ASELA authorities and the income received from other partners for 2021/22, as requested at the previous meeting, alongside the budgeted income for 2022/23 and an initial budget forecast for 2023/24.

It was reported that the budget for 2021/22 currently forecast an in-year deficit of £66,000, which would be met from reserves arising from underspends in previous years, but that it was anticipated that the financial position of would show an £11,000 surplus for 2021/22 at year-end. The lead Chief Financial Officer reported that, at the present time, there were no financial issues or concerns to be brought to the attention of members.

The Joint Committee was advised that a surplus of £25,000 was currently forecast for 2022/23, although the ongoing level of such surplus would evolve alongside the development of appropriate business cases for the key programmes over the year.

Resolved:

That the ASELA finance report for February 2022, be noted.

19 Thames Freeport Programme - Highlight Report

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

It was reported that Rt Hon Ruth Kelly had recently been appointed as the interim Chair of the Thames Freeport Governing Board and that the final business case for the Freeport had been submitted to the Government on 8 January 2022. The Joint Committee noted that the business case was now be considered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Treasury and that, following approval of the business case, the Board would be expanded to include other stakeholders.

The Joint Committee was reminded that the Thames Freeport programme was aligned with the successful delivery of each of the other ASELA key programmes and that the £6m skills levy committed by the private sector leaders of the Thames Freeport initiative would provide significant support for the establishment of the proposed South Essex Technical University. The Joint Committee was advised that the outcomes arising from the establishment of the Thames Freeport would benefit not only the immediate area of the Freeport, but also have positive impacts across South Essex whilst also complementing the aspirations set out in the recently published Levelling Up White Paper.

The Joint Committee considered that it was important for the success of the programme, that the aspirations of ASELA for the Thames Freeport be conveyed beyond the scope of the current key private sector partners, to ensure that small and medium-size enterprises were also engaged with the programme and were aware of the benefits that could be generated for local businesses by the operation of the Freeport.

Resolved:

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

20 Infrastructure & Housing Programme - Highlight Report

The Joint Committee received a report setting out the current progress of the Infrastructure and Housing programme.

It was reported that the place-based partnership between ASELA and Homes England had been formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Chair of the Joint Committee and the Chair of Homes England on 17 January 2022. The Joint Committee was advised that Memorandum of Understanding represented one of only two such accelerated housing partnerships across England and enabled ASELA to work alongside Homes England at a more strategic level than would normally be possible by individual local authorities, but that discussions on the funding of specific projects would continue to be held directly with local authorities by Homes England, where appropriate. The Joint Committee was informed that further work was currently planned to strengthen links between housing associations, small and medium-size enterprises and ASELA, to increase capacity for accelerated housing provision.

The Joint Committee was advised that work had commenced on a project to vision new settlements and urban extensions through appropriate engagement, although it was emphasised that the planning of such new settlements and extensions would remain a sovereign matter for individual local authorities. It was reported that Essex County Council were providing impetus to the work around the visioning of new settlements and urban extensions to ensure that its ambitions for sustainable transport and active travel were designed into new settlements, to provide relevant infrastructure and facilitate appropriate behaviour change.

It was reported that a draft version of the non-statutory South Essex Joint Strategic Framework designed to complement the local plans of each local authority was nearing completion and that it was anticipated that this would be rolled-out for discussion with Leaders and relevant Cabinet Members/Portfolio Holders over the next month.

Resolved:

- (1) That the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between ASELA and Homes England be noted.
- (2) That the proposed further work to unlock housing sites already approved by constituent ASELA local authorities, be approved.
- (3) That the further planned action to support market stimulation, including work with housing associations, small and medium-size enterprises and guidelines for new settlements and urban extensions, be noted.

21 South Essex Estuary Park (SEE Park) Programme - Highlight Report

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

It was reported that work was progressing well on the initial stages of the programme, which was closely linked with the development of the South Essex Joint Strategic Framework and the other key programmes of ASELA. The Joint Committee was reminded that the aspiration of the SEE Park programme was for the provision of 23,000 hectares of 'green and blue' infrastructure across South

Essex, and that it was therefore necessary for elements of the programme to be delivered over time and in conjunction with the aspects of the other key programmes.

The Joint Committee was advised that the draft design for the first phase of the demonstrator project at the Central Thames Marshland had been completed and that draft business cases for each of the other proposed landscape spaces were being developed for future consideration by the Committee, to provide a high-level overview of the SEE PARK delivery programme and identify potential project partners and funding streams. It was reported that Metal had been appointed to support the Creative Workstream within the programme to facilitate the development of the creative and cultural arising from the SEE PARK.

The Joint Committee considered that it was important for the success of the programme, that the aspirations of ASELA for the concept of the connected SEE Park across local authority boundaries, be explained as part of an appropriate communications strategy that also set out how the establishment of the SEE Park would address the existing carbon reduction and biodiversity objectives of the individual ASELA authorities.

Resolved:

That the progress of the SEE Park programme be noted and that the continued support to deliver the programme, be endorsed.

22 Full Fibre Digital Programme - Highlight Report

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

It was reported that infrastructure laying for the Phase 2 of the local full fibre network scheme was progressing well and that full fibre connectivity had now been achieved or identified for over 200 public sector sites across South Essex. The Joint Committee was advised that the programme was currently focussed on opportunities for the leverage of investment from fibre carriers and infrastructure providers and the delivery of 'Taking of Service' work to ensure that connected sites could derive best value for local areas from connectivity with the full fibre infrastructure. The Joint Committee was informed that a report in respect of the procurement framework arrangements for Taking of Service for village halls and community centres being led by Brentwood Borough Council, would be made to the next meeting.

The Joint Committee was advised that a communication strategy around the local impacts and benefits arising from the delivery of the Full Fibre Digital programme and the lessons learnt from pilot scheme hosted by Thurrock Borough Council to reduce social isolation in sheltered accommodation, was currently being developed.

It was reported that market engagement with fibre carriers and infrastructure providers that had expressed interest in investing in the region and the alignment of private sector investment with the priorities of ASELA, was a key aspect of the delivery of the Full Fibre Digital programme, to ensure that connectivity was rolled out as quickly as possible. The Joint Committee was advised that the delivery of

the programme would also continue to focus on ensuring that coverage 'Not Spots' across the region were identified and addressed, to ensure that the achievement of an inclusive digital infrastructure going forward.

Resolved:

- (1) That the progress of the Full Fibre Digital programme be noted and that the continued support to deliver the programme, be endorsed.
- (2) That details of the public sector sites across South Essex for which full fibre connectivity has been completed pursuant to Phase 1 of the programme, and the additional sites identified for full fibre installation as part of Phase 2 of the programme, be circulated to all members of the Joint Committee.

23 South Essex Technical University Programme - Highlight Report

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

It was reported that, following the approval of the feasibility study in early 2021, the first draft of the detailed business case for the proposed South Essex Technical University was being developed to address feedback received from stakeholders and the Partnership Board and was anticipated to be completed by the end of February 2022, for consideration at the next meeting. It was noted that the timescale for approval of the full business case had slipped in order to ensure that it secure the funding needed to progress to the next phase of the programme.

The Joint Committee was advised that the financial model for the Technical University was considered to be commercially viable, although it would require cashflow funding in the start-up phase, but that potential sources of funding were being explored, including through strengthened links with Thames Freeport. It was reported that the development of the proposed Technical University was consistent with the aspirations of the Government set out in the recent Levelling Up White Paper.

It was reported that the Partnership Board was working on the development of a high-level plan to secure the next phase of the programme, including company formation and governance arrangements, the securing of funding to 'pump prime' the programme through engagement with local business and the development of the skills pipeline, and the procurement of an appropriate higher education partner.

The Joint Committee considered that it was important for the success of the programme, that the aspirations of ASELA for the South Essex Technical University be conveyed beyond the scope of the current key private sector partners, to ensure that small and medium-size enterprises were also engaged with the programme and were aware of the benefits that could be generated for local businesses in terms of addressing current and future skills requirements across South Essex.

Resolved:

That the progress on the development of the full business case for the South Essex Technical University, in advance of its presentation to the next meeting of the Joint Committee, be recognised and supported.

24 Association of South Essex Local Authorities - Communications Report

The Joint Committee received an update on recent communications and engagement activity undertaken to support ASELA and the delivery of the current key programmes.

It was reported that progress had been made to update the ASELA communications channels and to increase engagement with the key programmes by stakeholders, through the building of a South Essex 'brand.' The Joint Committee considered proposals for the development of a communications and engagement strategy for ASELA and was advised of several forthcoming events and project milestones that would provide proactive communication and engagement opportunities.

The Joint Committee considered that opportunities to raise the profile of ASELA and the current key programmes, through appropriate engagement with local Members of Parliament to support and promote the success of projects across South Essex, should be investigated as part of the proposed communications and engagement strategy for ASELA.

Resolved:

- (1) That the recent communications and engagement activity to support ASELA and the delivery of the key programmes be noted.
- (2) That the proposed communications and engagement strategy for ASELA be endorsed.
- (3) That details of the respective social media platforms for ASELA and the key programmes be circulated to all members of the Joint Committee.

25 'South Essex No Use Empty' Scheme

The Joint Committee received an overview of the 'No Use Empty South Essex' Scheme for bringing long-term empty properties back into alternative commercial or mixed-use commercial/residential use to aid the revitalisation of town centres.

The Joint Committee was advised that 'No Use Empty' was a project that had been run successfully by Kent County Council for a number of years and was recognised as good practice by the Government and that the relationship of the scheme for South Essex' with Kent County Council had been formalised through a Service Level Agreement, with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council acting as the 'accountable body for the funding of the scheme locally.

It was reported that through work led by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, grant funding of £2.2m had been secured for the scheme to deliver 10 to 15 projects across South Essex and that the role of the ASELA local authorities would be to publicise and market the scheme locally to ensure that a strong pipeline of potential projects was identified to ensure that return on investment was

maximised. The Joint Committee was advised that the scheme had been launched on 7 February 2022.

The Joint Committee requested that clarification be sought as to whether the £1.2m grant funding received for the Scheme from the 'Getting Building Fund' should be expended on bringing empty properties back into use before the funding of £1m secured from the 'Growing Places Fund', as it was suggested that the grant funding received from the 'Getting Building Fund' might need to be spent by the end of September 2022.

Resolved:

- (1) That the overview of the 'No Use Empty South Essex' Scheme be noted.
- (2) That the ASELA local authorities ensure that their respective Economic Development and Regeneration and Teams are involved in promoting the opportunities provided by the Scheme for their areas and the ASELA partnership.
- (3) That opportunities for appropriate publicity to promote the support of ASELA for the launch of the Scheme, be investigated.
- (4) That the success of the Scheme and the operation of the Service Level Agreement with Kent County Council be reviewed by the Joint Committee at an appropriate juncture.

DATE 14 July 2022	ITEM: 5
ASELA Joint Committee Meeting	
Report Title: Review of Governing Documents	
Report of: Paul Burkinshaw, Monitoring Officer, Basildon Borough Council	
Programme Implementation Director: N/A	
Accountable Programme SRO: N/A	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

At its first meeting held on 28th October 2021, the Joint Committee noted the governance arrangements for the committee which had been approved by each of the constituent authorities as attached at Appendix 1.

The Governing Documents provide for them to be reviewed annually with the first review taking place in February/March 2022. This enables the arrangements set out therein to be subject to regular review and ensure that the governance arrangements remain fit to support ASELA’s developing ambitions.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Joint Committee endorses and notes the amendment to ASELA Joint Committee Governing Documents as referred to on this report and that no other changes are required at this time.

2. Introduction and Background

Governance Arrangements

2.1 In agreeing to form part of the ASELA Joint Committee, the constituent authorities all adopted the Joint Committee Agreement and Constitution (‘the Governing Documents’). These were reported to and noted by the Joint Committee at its first meeting. The Governing Documents provide for them to be reviewed annually with the first review taking place in February/March 2022.

2.2 Whilst there have only been 2 formal meetings of the Joint Committee held, it is beneficial to ensure they are fit for purpose. The governing documents have provided for the Joint Committee to establish itself and put in place necessary governance arrangements including election of chair and vice-chair, appointment of accountable body and secretariat and facilitated effective conduct of the initial meetings of the Joint Committee

- 2.3 A meeting of the constituent authorities Monitoring Officers and Chief Financial (S151) Officers has been held to consider whether they feel any changes should be made at this time and consultation has also been undertaken with constituent authorities Chief Executives.
- 2.4 It was identified following initial adoption by constituent authorities and set out in the report to the meeting of the joint committee held on 28th October 2021 that it would be beneficial to more explicitly clarify that as a formal Joint Committee its proceedings are bound by the provisions of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, but that constituent authorities have agreed and shall be expected to operate in accordance with the local arrangements set out in the Governing Documents. This primarily relates to the governing documents providing for there being no casting vote and for decisions that affect a specific authority requiring the support of that authority as opposed to simply a majority vote. It is proposed that this be referenced through the insertion of a paragraph (1.8) as below –
- ‘The Joint Committee and its proceedings are bound by Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, however constituent authorities have agreed and shall be expected to operate in accordance with the local arrangements set out in the Governing Documents’.*
- 2.5 This change is considered to be a matter of clarification regarding the approved arrangements and therefore is not considered to require approval of each constituent authority through its own decision making processes.
- 2.6 As ASELA’s programmes develop/progress it will be important to ensure that the governance arrangements remain fit for purpose and facilitate effective delivery of the programmes. The annual review already referred to will provide a mechanism for this.
- 2.7 The Joint Committee is also asked to note that arising from the discussions regarding the governing documents, an Assurance Framework is being developed to provide clarity and understanding of the arrangements and processes that exist across ASELA programmes, and ensure these are consistent and fit for purpose, as the ASELA programmes develop/progress in the future.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Joint Committee has the option of making revisions to its governing documents, however no specific changes are recommended as being necessary at this time and it should be noted that any fundamental changes will require the approval of each constituent authority through its own decision making processes.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 This report asks the Joint Committee to make some minor revisions to its governing documents in order to provide clarification but no further changes are considered necessary at this early stage in the operation of the Joint Committee.

5. Consultation (if applicable)

5.1 Consultation on the content of this report has been undertaken with the Chief Executives, Monitoring Officers and Chief Financial (s151) Officers 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

Report Author:

NAME: Paul Burkinshaw

TITLE: Monitoring Officer, Basildon Borough Council

PROGRAMME: N/A

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Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA)

Joint Committee Agreement and Constitution



1. Introduction

- 1.1 The core purpose of the Joint Committee is to provide place leadership for South Essex. Recognising that through a collaborative approach, the constituent authorities will be best placed to develop and deliver a vision for South Essex up to 2050, promoting healthy growth for communities.
- 1.2 The Joint Committee 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 individual areas to flourish and realise their full economic and social potential.
- 1.3 This agreement sets out how the ASELA Joint Committee shall operate in seeking to deliver its overarching purpose, what powers and functions it holds, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that it operates efficiently, effectively and is both transparent and accountable.
- 1.4 The Joint Committee shall come into effect from 1st April 2021.
- 1.5 The Association shall operate and discharge its functions through a Joint Committee between all local authorities formally established in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and who have agreed to form part of the Joint Committee and made the agreed financial contribution to support the work of the joint committee. It has 7 members, being:
- a councillor (elected member) appointed by each of the 'Constituent Councils' which includes :
 - Basildon Borough Council
 - Brentwood Borough Council
 - Castle Point Borough Council
 - Essex County Council
 - Rochford District Council
 - Southend Borough Council
 - Thurrock Council
- 1.6 The Joint Committee shall have the ability to agree to additional local authorities, who it is considered are able to contribute to the aims of the Joint Committee, to join the committee as a 'constituent council'. Any such authorities will need to have formally agreed, in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to form part of the Joint Committee and made the agreed financial contribution to support the work of the Joint Committee.
- 1.7 The Joint Committee is subject to overview and scrutiny through constituent authorities' own scrutiny arrangements.

2. Principles

- 2.1 This agreement and the terms of reference provide a basis for the work of ASELA. A review of this document shall be undertaken by the Joint Committee at the end of the 2021/22 municipal year and annually thereafter
- 2.2 There shall be no transfer of powers currently held by any constituent authority to the Joint Committee and this document makes no provision for such.
- 2.3 No decision can be taken by the Joint Committee which relates to any matter that is in the preserve of a specific constituent borough/district authority unless that authority indicates its agreement with the proposal.
- 2.4 An 'accountable body' in relation to the functions and resources of ASELA shall be agreed by the Joint Committee
- 2.5 A local authority will be designated to provide secretariat to the Joint Committee which shall be agreed by the Joint Committee

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTIONS

A. JOINT COMMITTEE

1. Overview

The Joint Committee has been formally established by all constituent councils in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to discharge the functions of ASELA as set out in this Constitution.

2. Membership

2.1 Appointment.

Membership of the Joint Committee shall consist of the Constituent Council Members who comprise the Joint Committee, whereby each shall appoint –

- (i) one of its elected members as a member of the joint committee, preferably to be the Leader of the Council; and
- (ii) another elected member as a substitute member to act in the absence of the member appointed under (i) above

The joint committee shall have the ability to appoint co-opted members (without voting rights) to the Joint Committee as they see fit.

2.2 Term of Membership

- (a) Members or substitute members cease to be a member or substitute member of the joint committee –
 - I. if they cease to be a member of the constituent council that appointed them; or
 - II. A person may resign as a member or substitute member of the joint committee by written notice served on the proper officer of the council of the constituent council that appointed them; or
- (b) Where a member or substitute member's appointment ceases the constituent council that made the appointment must, as soon as practicable, give written notice of that fact to the Association's Secretariat and appoint another of its elected members in that person's place;
- (c) A constituent council may at any time terminate the appointment of a member or substitute member appointed by it to the Association and appoint another of its elected members in that person's place.
- (d) Where a constituent council exercises its power under subparagraph (c), it must give written notice of the new appointment and the termination of the previous appointment to the

Association's Secretariat and the new appointment shall take effect and the previous appointment terminate with immediate effect.

- 2.3 **Chair** – A Chair and Vice-Chair shall be appointed at the first meeting of the joint committee. Appointment of a new Chair and Vice-Chair shall take place by the end of June each year, following the annual meetings of all constituent councils. The Chair or, in his or her absence, the Vice-Chair shall chair all meetings of the joint committee when present.
- 2.4 **Quorum.** No business of the joint committee shall be transacted unless at least half of the Constituent Council Members or substitute members appointed are present.

3. Meetings and Procedure

3.1 Voting

- (a) Subject to those matters at paragraph (d) below, any matters that are to be decided by the joint committee are to be decided by a majority of the members present and voting on that question at a meeting of the joint committee, such majority to include substitute members, acting in place of members.
- (b) Each member, or a substitute member acting in that member's place, is in post is to have one vote and no member or substitute member is to have a casting vote.
- (c) If a vote is tied on any matter it shall be deemed not to have been carried. There shall be no casting vote.
- (d) A decision on a question relating to a matter that is in the preserve of a specific local authority shall require the support and agreement of that specific authority.

3.2 Procedure

- (a) The joint committee will conduct business in accordance with the meeting standing orders set out in these terms of reference.
- (b) The proceedings of the joint committee are not invalidated by any vacancy among its members or substitute members or by any defect in the appointment or qualifications of any member or substitute member

4. Sub-Committees and advisory bodies

4.1 The joint committee -

- (a) may establish such other sub-committees, which may include the cooption of any non-voting members, as it sees fit; and

- (b) may establish such advisory panels and ad-hoc working groups as it considers may be expedient to assist it.

5. Delegation

5.1 The exercise of the joint committee's functions may be delegated to:

- (a) a sub-committee; or
- (b) an officer.

A record of such delegations shall be maintained

6. Core Purpose, Aims and Functions

Core Purpose and aims

- 6.1 The core purpose of the Joint Committee is to provide place leadership for South Essex. Recognising that through a collaborative approach, the constituent authorities will be best placed to develop and deliver a vision for South Essex up to 2050, promoting healthy growth for communities.
- 6.2 The Joint Committee 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 individual areas to flourish and realise their full economic and social potential.
- 6.3 The primary aims of Joint Committee will be to:
- Provide place leadership;
 - Open up spaces for housing, business and leisure development by developing a spatial strategy;
 - Transform transport connectivity;
 - Support the 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; and
 - Work with and provide a voice for South Essex working with the Thames Estuary Growth Board.

Principles of collaboration

6.4 Collaboration will be focused on three key areas:

- Tackling problems we can't solve individually
- Creating collective scale and impact
- Providing the place leadership to promote and sell the 'South Essex' proposition

Specific Functions

6.5 The functions of the joint committee are as follows:

- Provide oversight and direction of programmes of work aligned to the core purpose and aims of the joint committee set out above.
- Commissioning and co-ordination of delivery of programmes, projects and development of policy against in accordance with the core purpose and aims of the joint committee and allocate resources accordingly
- Submission of bids for funding to Central Government and other bodies as considered appropriate to deliver the vision and objectives, subject to the advice and approval of the Chief Financial (S151) Officer of the accountable body.
- Provide oversight and direction associated with the Joint Strategic Plan and approve any strategic planning framework proposals for consideration by individual local authorities
- Management and oversight of expenditure and activity associated with funding received from Government and other sources
- Agree the level of financial contributions required from each local authority as a member of the joint committee to support its work.
- Ensure effective relationships and collaboration as necessary to achieve ASELA's vision, with Central Government and other regional and national bodies including the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and Opportunity South Essex.

MEETINGS STANDING ORDERS

1. Interpretation, Suspension and Chair's Ruling

- 1.1 These Standing Orders apply to meetings of the joint committee, and where appropriate, to meetings of any sub-committees. Any reference to committee in these Standing Orders also refers to sub-committees.
- 1.5 The ruling of the Chair on the interpretation of these Standing Orders in relation to all questions of order and matters arising in debate shall be final.



2. Revisions to Standing Orders

- 2.1 Standing Orders may be changed by the joint committee, which will be subject to a unanimous vote, either at the Annual Meeting or by a motion on notice made at a meeting of the joint committee.

3. Chairing of Meetings

- 3.1 The Chair shall chair all meetings of the joint committee whenever he or she is present.
- 3.2 In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the meeting shall appoint another member to chair the meeting.
- 3.3 The Chair (or the Vice Chair or any other Member presiding in the absence of the Chair or Vice Chair) shall not have a casting vote on any issue.

4. Meetings

- 4.1 The Annual Meeting of the joint committee shall be held annually in June on a date and at a time following the annual meetings of all 'Constituent Councils'
- 4.2 Ordinary meetings of committee for the transaction of general business shall be held on such dates and at such times as the committee shall determine.
- 4.3 All meetings of the committee shall be open to the public (including the press) except to the extent that they are excluded whether during the whole or part of the proceedings either:
- (a) In accordance with Section 100A(2) of the Local Government Act 1972; or
 - (b) By resolution passed to exclude the public on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. Any such Resolution shall identify the proceedings or the part of the proceedings to which it applies and state the description, in terms of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 of the exempt information giving rise to the exclusion of the public.

5. Notice of Meetings

- 5.1 At least five clear working days before a meeting of a committee:
- (a) notice of the time and place of the intended meeting shall be published;
 - (b) a summons to attend the meeting, specifying an agenda for the meeting, shall be sent to all Members of the joint committee by electronic mail.

5.2 Lack of service on a member of the committee of the summons shall not affect the validity of a meeting of the committee.

5.3 Each constituent authority shall ensure a link from their own website to information regarding meetings of ASELA and copies of agendas and minutes.

6. Meeting Agendas

6.1 The Chair of the Joint Committee will decide upon the agenda for the meetings. The Chair may put on the agenda of any meeting any matter which the Chair wishes.

6.2 Any Member of the committee may require that an item is placed on the agenda of the next available meeting of the committee for consideration.

6.3 Any item proposed to be included on the agenda for any meeting of the committee in accordance with sub-paragraph 6.2 above, which is not submitted in writing before 7 working days of the meeting, shall not be included on the agenda for that meeting unless it is agreed by the Chair. In this case the amended agenda for the meeting will state the reason for the late acceptance of any such item.

6.4 The agenda for each meeting of the committee shall set out the items of business requested by Members (if any) in the order in which they have been received, unless the Member concerned has given notice prior to the issue of the agenda, for it to be withdrawn. If the Member concerned is not present at the meeting when an item of which they have given notice comes up for discussion, this item shall, unless the committee decides otherwise, be treated as withdrawn.

7. Access to Information

7.1 Access to agenda, reports and associated documents in respect of a meeting of the committee are as determined by Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 (Access to Meetings and Documents of Certain Authorities, Committees and Sub-Committees).

8. Quorum

8.1 No business shall be transacted at any meeting of a committee unless at least half of the Members or substitute members appointed by the constituent councils are present.

8.2 If at the time for which a meeting is called, and for 15 minutes thereafter, a quorum is not present, then no meeting shall take place.

8.3 If during any meeting of the committee the Chair, after counting the number of Members present, declares that there is not a quorum present, the meeting shall stand adjourned to a time fixed by the Chair. If there is no quorum and the Chair does not fix a time for the

reconvened meeting, the meeting shall stand adjourned to the next ordinary meeting of the committee.

9. Order of Business

9.1 At every meeting of the committee the order of business shall be to select a person to preside if the Chair or Vice-Chair are absent and thereafter shall be in accordance with the order specified in the agenda for the meeting, except that such order may be varied -

- (a) by the Chair at his/her discretion; or
- (b) on a request agreed by the committee

9.2 The Chair may bring before the committee at their discretion any matter that they consider appropriate to bring before the committee as a matter of urgency.

10. Standing Orders of Debate

10.1 The Chair shall decide all questions of order and any ruling by the Chair upon such questions and the interpretation of these Standing Orders of Procedure and upon matters rising in debate shall be final and shall not be open to discussion.

11. Voting

11.1 Subject to sub-paragraph 11.6, any matters that are to be decided by the committee are to be decided by a majority of the members present and voting on that matter at a meeting of the committee, such majority to include substitute members, acting in place of members.

11.2 Each member appointed according to the provisions in paragraph 1, or a substitute member acting in that member's place, and the Chair, or the Vice-Chair acting in his or her place is to have one vote and no member or substitute member is to have a casting vote.

11.3 If a vote is tied on any matter it shall be deemed not to have been carried.

11.4 Whenever a vote is taken at meetings it shall be by a show of hands. On the requisition of any member, supported by one other Member who signifies their support, and before the vote is taken, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each Member present gave their vote for or against that question or abstained from voting.

11.5 A Member, or Substitute Member acting in that Member's place may demand that his/her vote be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.

11.6 A decision on a question relating to a matter that is in the preserve of a specific local authority shall require the support and agreement of that specific authority.

12. Conduct

12.2 In the event of general disturbance, which in the opinion of the Chair, renders the due and orderly dispatch of business impossible the Chair, in addition to any other power vested in the Chair may, without question put, adjourn the meeting of the committee for such period as the Chair considers expedient.

13. Disturbance by Members of the Public

13.1 If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting of the committee the Chair shall warn him or her. If they continue the interruption the Chair shall order his or her removal from the room. In the case of general disturbance in any part of the room open to the public the Chair shall order that part to be cleared.

14. Notification and Declaration of Interests

Members of the committee shall comply with their respective councils Code of Conduct for Members.

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DATE 14 July 2022	ITEM: 6
ASELA Joint Committee Meeting	
Report Title: ASELA Joint Committee Accountable Body and Secretariat Arrangements	
Report of: Pete Bates, Interim Director of Financial Services, Southend-on-Sea City Council	
Programme Implementation Director: N/A	
Accountable Programme SRO: N/A	
This report is public	

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 Accountable Body for ASELA from Castle Point Borough Council to Southend-on-Sea City Council and to transfer the provision of secretariat support for the Joint Committee from Southend-on-Sea City Council to Thurrock Borough Council.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Southend-on-Sea City Council act as the Accountable Body in relation to the functions and resources of ASELA with effect from the date of this meeting.
- 1.2 That Thurrock Borough Council take over the role of the secretariat function for the Joint Committee with effect from the date of this meeting.

2. Introduction and Background

Accountable Body

- 2.1 The Governing Documents require that an 'Accountable Body' in relation to the functions and resources of ASELA shall be agreed by the Joint Committee. Prior

to the establishment of the Joint Committee, Castle Point Borough Council were acting as the Accountable Body. Given the potential growth in the future scope and responsibilities of the partnership and accountable body requirements going forward, it is recommended that this responsibility transfers to Southend-on-Sea City Council. This will also enable the accountable body to further support the new governance assurance framework and implement tighter controls around the finances of ASELA.

Secretariat

- 2.2 The Governing Documents state that a local authority will be designated to provide secretariat to the Joint Committee which shall be agreed by the Joint Committee. To date Southend-on-Sea City Council have been providing this support, it is now proposed that Thurrock Council provide secretariat to the Joint committee.

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 Accountable Body and it was felt that Castle Point did not have the capacity 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 Accountable Body from Castle Point Borough Council to Southend-on-Sea City Council who will be able to provide the increased level of support required by the partnership.
- 4.2 At the same time, approve the transfer of the provision of secretariat from Southend-on-Sea City Council to Thurrock Council.

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

Report Author:

NAME: Pete Bates

TITLE: Interim Director of Financial Services, Southend-on-Sea City Council

PROGRAMME: N/A

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Association of South Essex Local Authorities	
Joint Committee – 14th July 2022	Agenda Item 7
ASELA Financial Report	Contact Officer Lance Wosko lwosko@castlepoint.gov.uk 01268 882223

Introduction

This report is intended to:

- Present the provisional financial position for ASELA the 2021/22 financial year
- Present the latest 2022/23 forecast for ASELA, based on currently approved programmes of work.

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, or when unavoidable costs have been incurred.

2. 2021/22 Provisional Outturn and 2022/23 Current Forecast

- 2.1 The 2021/22 provisional outturn and 2022/23 forecast income and expenditure for ASELA, is summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1			
Income and Expenditure Summary	2021/22 £000's	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's
Income			
Partnership Investment	(420)	(420)	(420)
Other partners			
Homes England	180	0	0
Highways England	(65)	(900)	0
SE Tech Uni – private sector investment	(30)	0	0
SE Tech Uni – Opportunity South Essex	(20)	0	0
Digital – SELEP Getting Building Fund	0	(631)	0
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
Total Income	(645)	(2,026)	(420)
Programme Expenditure			
SEE Park	387	1,015	25
South Essex Technical University	161	155	0
Full Fibre Digital	49	761	25
Thames Freeport	60	0	0
Infrastructure and Housing	118	114	0
Operating and Other Costs	121	55	55
Total Expenditure	896	2,100	105
In year (surplus) / deficit	251	74	(315)
ASELA Reserve			
Balance brought forward	(77)	174	248
Non-ringfenced in year (surplus) / deficit	271	54	(315)
Ringfenced income: SE Tech Uni	(20)	20	0
Net in-year (surplus) / deficit	251	74	(315)
Balance carried forward	174	248	(67)

2021/22 Provisional Outturn

- 2.2 The 2021/22 provisional outturn is a deficit of £251k. This is an adverse movement from the previously reported forecast and is predominately caused by £240k of income previously expected from Homes England not being received during the year.
- 2.3 Significant effort has been made to secure the £240k of income from Homes England, but it has not proved possible to find a workable solution which would allow Homes England to fund the work that was completed in anticipation of the promised funding being received.
- 2.4 Whilst it has not be possible to secure the funding during 2021/22, conversations are continuing with Homes England, with a commitment made to fund activity in 2022/23 instead. This commitment is not currently reflected in Table 1 above, as it is not yet

known what conditions, if any, will be applied to the funding. It is possible it will allow ASELA to fund existing planned activity, or alternatively the conditions might stipulate that it has to be new specific commitments.

- 2.5 Within the **£251k** deficit, income from Opportunity South Essex of **£20k** towards the South Essex Technical University programme is included. This income needs to be held in a ringfenced reserve and applied to expenditure to be incurred in 2022/23.
- 2.6 Taking into account the surplus funds brought forward from prior years of **£77k**, the 2021/22 deficit of **£251k** has resulted in an overall ASELA deficit at the end of 2021/22 of **£174k**.

2022/23 Forecast

- 2.7 The current 2022/23 forecast is a deficit of **£74k** of which **£54k** is unfunded activity and **£20k** is funded by the ringfenced funds as explained in paragraph 2.5 above.
- 2.8 The forecast position shown takes into account item 12 on this Committee's agenda and the recommendation that **£60k** be allocated to the South Essex Technical University programme.
- 2.9 Should nothing else change, the **£74k** deficit, when added to the closing 2021/22 position, would result in ASELA having an overall deficit of **£248k** which is clearly an unsustainable position. Consequently, either additional income needs to be secured or savings achieved. It is proposed that a plan to eradicate the deficit is brought to the next Joint Committee meeting.
- 2.10 As previously referenced in paragraph 2.4, it might be possible to secure Homes England funding to fund planned activity in 2022/23. ASELA currently has **£114k** allocated for the Infrastructure and Housing programme. If Homes England funding can be secured for this activity, this would reduce the overall deficit from **£248k** to **£134k**.

3. Recommendations:

That the Joint Committee note the content of the report and agree for a plan to eradicate the forecast deficit is brought to the next Joint Committee meeting.

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Report Date:	June 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 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

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

SEEPARK is placing nature at the heart of place-making across South Essex, SEEPARK aims to ensure that South Essex becomes the best place it can be by leveraging the natural environment and green/blue space that it enjoys. SEEPARK will deliver significant place-making benefits:

- Economically by enabling sustainable development, increasing eco-tourism, encouraging (promoting) the creation of green tech jobs, and providing local business with the ability to carbon offset at scale
- Socially by providing better access to green space, positively supporting health and wellbeing and encouraging connected active travel networks.
- Environmentally by mitigating climate change and flooding by creating adaptive landscapes, delivering 24,000 hectares of connected and protected landscapes and enhancing biodiversity.

SEEPARK will protect, link and nurture five varied large-scale landscapesⁱ covering 24,000 hectares across South Essex. These areas already contain existing initiatives that are starting to deliver large scale landscape and habitat improvements. SEEPARK will connect them, thus creating:

- A high-quality green space within 500m of every front door or workplace, starting with new developments and re-developments
- 175 km of connected walking and cycle routes, including a continuous 70km coastal path from Tilbury Fort to Shoeburyness
- 2,500 hectares of enhanced park and recreational areas
- 4,500 hectares of woodlands and grasslands
- 7,500 hectares of marshlands and wetlands
- 8,500 hectares of improved agriculture and semi-natural green space
- 1,000 hectares of golf courses with potential for habitat enhancement



SEEPARK is enshrined within the emerging Joint Strategic Framework as a central theme to place-making and a critical infrastructure for housing and employment growth. SEEPARK also addresses the requirements of the Environment Act including helping deliver the 10% minimum Biodiversity Net Gain for land development.

Programme Resources

The programme is adequately resourced and within budget spend, there are no resource implications that are impacting programme delivery

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>A summary of recent focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A business case for each of the 5 landscape spaces is in development, this will provide a summary of the indicative programme delivery plan with projected spend costs up to 2030 and 2050. • SEEPARK is now incorporated within the Joint Strategic Framework as a central theme to place-making and critical infrastructure for housing and employment growth. • The Environment Act and National Planning Policy Frameworks recognise the need for an integrated landscape-scale approach to planning, managing and improving the natural environment. SEEPARK provides a way to deliver against the requirements of the Environment Act and the 10% minimum Biodiversity Net Gain for land development. The SEEPARK programme is now in discussion with Joint Planning Officer Group and developer teams to deliver in an integrated way. • ASELA South Essex Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure Study has been shortlisted for the Planning Awards 2022 in the Natural Environment category and the East of England RTPA Awards for Planning Excellence 2022 in the Best Project category. Winners will be announced in June 2022. • The Creative Workstream commenced in April'22 and is working to develop the creative and cultural offer for South Essex within both SEEPARK and the other anchor programmes. Several focus groups from the sector have taken place with more to follow along with work to align strategies and public sector resources. • Draft design for the first phase of the demonstrator project at Central Thames Marshland is now complete and funding is available, discussions in place with relevant landowners with planning permissions to be obtained. • Procurement now concluded for Landscape Architects for Phase 2 & 3 of the CTM path and subject to funding Alexandra Steed URBAN have been appointed. 	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	
<div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Will not be met</div>	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

ⁱ Central Thames Marshland, Island Wetlands, Central Woodland Arc, Mardyke Valley, Brentwood Parklands

Report Date:	June 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 ambition for South Essex is that every household, business and community facility has access to affordable full fibre digital connectivity by 2025. Focused on four key themes.

To deliver Full Fibre Coverage where possible by 2025: Through market stimulation and investment

Expanding Mobile Coverage: Engage mobile operators to make South Essex attractive for investment, improve 4G and expand 5G coverage

Improving Public Service: Leverage our 200km of LFFN network for the benefit of the public sector across South Essex, driving down costs and opening up innovation through shared infrastructure and shared digital services.

Opening up Access for All: Address digital exclusion across South Essex making 'decent' broadband available and affordable for all and ensuring everyone has basic digital skills

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&2: The programme successfully secured a £4.4m grant from DCMS and subsequently a £2.5m grant from MHCLG to install full fibre infrastructure across the ASELA region. Installation began in Aug '20 and by Jul'22 over 200km of full fibre infrastructure will have been rolled out across SE, connecting around 190 public sector sites including libraries, sheltered accommodation, schools, fire stations as well as community and village halls. The full fibre network is available to public sector for use at no cost to the public sector for a period of 15 years, a significant achievement that differentiates is from grant funded projects across other regions. LFFN Phase 2 Village Halls and Community Centres: The LFFN rollout will provide full fibre to circa 20 village halls and community centres across the region. The aim is to work with these community facilities with a view to strengthen their role within the communities potentially enable them as digital hubs. The initiative will be further developed and implemented by end of 2022. Taking of Service: While the fibre has been laid, it remains dark until it is 'lit' that is to say a service is taken from it. This is a key requirement of the grant funding when real benefit will be delivered to the public sector. A procurement process is currently underway and will be concluded by end of August 2022. Market Engagement: A key requirement from the grant funding was for it to stimulate private sector investment through both leveraging spare capacity and through profile raising of ASELA. Ongoing discussions and market engagement are in place with a view to stimulate investment particularly in 'not spot' areas. Digital Inclusion Sheltered Housing: Funding of 85K has been secured within Thurrock Council to leverage the full fibre deployment for residents Health and Wellbeing. Rollout is currently taking place with a plan to trial over the summer, and further rollout across other ASELA partners ASELA new developments and regeneration schemes: The digital programme continues to advise and work closely with the ASELA Joint Planning Officers Group in contributing to the ASELA Housing Programme and working to ensure that in new developments the provision of telecom, full fibre and 4G/5G through early engagement with the market. 	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:	June 2022
Programme Name:	ACCELERATED HOUSING DELIVERY FOR SOUTH ESSEX
ASELA Chief SRO:	Jonathan Stephenson
Programme Implementation Director:	TBC
Lead Officer/Programme Manager:	Ian Butt

Decision:	<p>1 To note progress on the project and next steps</p> <p>2 To confirm engagement of Leaders on the New Settlements and Urban Extensions work stream</p>
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Programme Summary
<p>Overall Programme Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlock already planned housing sites to accelerate delivery and meet set targets through a series of interventions • Infrastructure led and delivery of affordable housing • Sites identification by councils. • Staged approach through series of tranches of sites • Establishing a Placed Based Partnership with Homes England and MHCLG (MOU) • Annual rolling business plan • Market stimulation – Housing Associations, SME House builders and developers • Guidelines for good place making for new settlements and urban extensions • Preparation of South Essex Joint Strategic Framework <p>The current phase of works (March to June 2022) is focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Place Based Partnership with Homes England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Partnership is in place ○ Priorities are threefold:

- Sites pipeline
 - Homes England are working with partners on the following sites:
 - Belmont Road – Thurrock
 - Culver Centre – Thurrock
 - Stambridge Mills – Rochford
 - Ford HQ Phase 2 – Brentwood
 - Marine Plaza – Southend
 - Small sites in Basildon
 - Hadleigh Island site – Castle Point
 - Collectively these will deliver some 1,000 dwellings
 - Homes England prioritizing support resources to assist in final technical appraisals which should take approximately 3 months ahead of funding applications
- New settlements and urban extensions
 - Homes England sponsored project that is looking at effective engagement to vision and plan new settlements; embedding a new model for stewardship during construction and post completion; and creation of a digital twin for engagement and stewardship
 - Outputs will include principles of good place making for large scale developments; how a 'day in the life' will be managed; principles and strategy for effective engagement with local residents; guidelines for assessing the cumulative impacts of major development on strategic infrastructure; how the collection, sharing and use of data can facilitate better place making and stewardship.
 - A draft document has been circulated and is currently being reviewed via the Joint Officers Group. Wider engagement will be needed
 - Completion is due in the Summer
- Resources
 - Ongoing discussions with Homes England about funding resources within ASELA
 - Firstly to further support councils deliver the pipeline sites (up to £120,000)
 - Secondly to provide wider support for ASELA projects that ASELA could be funding this year (up to £250,000)
- South Essex Joint Strategic Framework (South Essex Framework)
 - Draft attached
 - Summary version will be sent separately
 - Remains a non-statutory document and sets out the aspirations for good growth, applying a sequential approach to development, achieving zero carbon in new development and integrating the ASELA programmes and growth.

Project Status (What is going well/not going well):	Description of RAG Status and Key Project Decisions/Direction/Action:	
<p><i>Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England</i> MOU signed Resource requirements in progress and there is a need to agree requirements for 2022/23 onwards Confirmation is needed form Homes England of proposed funding Agreement is needed on how that money is spent Homes England have advised that they can once again provide direct funding to Councils In-kind resources from Homes England and ASELA Local Authorities, but not dedicated</p> <p><i>Sites Pipeline</i> It is not clear what the final settlement for grant or loan funding from the Spending Review will be Range of existing funding sources being explored further</p> <p><i>Market stimulation</i> Work has been progressing well, but slowed due to other priorities and need director in place to take forward. Ongoing engagement by the Board and Essex Developers Group with Housing Associations and SME's</p> <p><i>New settlements and urban extensions</i> Work underway, but finalizing the report will take additional time due to differing views between various stakeholders</p> <p><i>South Essex Joint Strategic Framework</i> Early composite draft completed Steer required from the CEOs Member engagement needs to take place ASAP and reourced by each Council and a Programme Director</p> <p>Resources Overall slippage due to other priorities of local officers, although officer input from Homes England is supporting pipeline work Urgent need for additional dedicated resource very apparent</p>	Scope	GREEN
	Risk	AMBER
	Issue	GREEN
	Cost	AMBER
	Time	AMBER

Report Date:	01 June 2022	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

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- 21,000 + new *additional* jobs, £4.56 billion investment, significant additional GVA across the region (c.£2.6 billion pa, equating to £65bn over 25 years), supply chain opportunities, strong innovation and R&D potential;
- Alignment to delivery of other ASELA projects, particularly the SE Technical University 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;
- 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 and the Thames Enterprise Park 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

During the bidding and business case processes resources direct from ASELA included OBC & FBC, public sector engagement and Interim Chair support provided by Martin Whiteley. Going forward it would now be appropriate for the TF costs to be met from the capacity funding from Government and other sources as identified in the FBC.

Other public sector resources included significant officer time from Thurrock to support the delivery of the OBC & FBC and the wider public policy objectives of Freeports. Thurrock Council is the Lead Local Authority and Accountable Body for Thames Freeport. Thurrock Council officer time will continue in this capacity as well as supporting Thames Freeport into its operational phase particularly across those elements integral to the regions economic growth ambitions including skills, net zero, energy / hydrogen development and ensuring strategic alignment with other major development opportunities across the region.

Unplanned Requests/Activities

No current unplanned activities or requests. OBC approved by Government in October 2021, with formal designation of Thames Freeport (tax sites and custom site operational) on 15th December 2021. FBC submitted to Government in January 2022. Responses to critical actions / clarifications on the FBC were submitted to Government including the Final FBC on 14th April. Final FBC currently undergoing quality assurance by Government in line with Green Book / 5 stage business case guidance and supplementary guidance issued by DLUHC as part of the Freeport process. A formal decision on the FBC is expected in June 2022.

Martin Whiteley has been confirmed as the Interim CEO of Thames Freeport.

Project Status (What is going well/not going well):	Description of RAG Status and Key Project Decisions/Direction/Action:	
Governance The Interim Board overseeing the business case process and ongoing liaison with Government for Thames Freeport particularly DLUHC and HMT. The membership comprises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rt. Hon Ruth Kelly (Chair) - Martin Whiteley (Interim CEO) - Forth Ports - DP World 	Scope	GREEN
	Risk	AMBER
	Issue	GREEN
	Cost	GREEN
	Time	AMBER

Project Status (What is going well/not going well):	Description of RAG Status and Key Project Decisions/Direction/Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ford - Thurrock Council (Lead Authority) - LBBD - DLUHC (Observer) <p>The Interim Board is responsible for agreeing the overall Freeport strategy; oversight and management of work streams, delivery of the business case process; 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 support delivery of the FBC in line with government expectations.</p> <p>OBC/FBC</p> <p>Thames Freeport partners developed a compelling Outline Business Case, which was approved by Government in October 2021. Building on the economic opportunities as outlined in the bid and aligning to the regional strategic priorities and public policy, working alongside colleagues in government and the Freeport Hub the FBC was submitted in January 2022 in line with the timeframe set by Government. Government sought clarification and additional information on aspects of the FBC. This was provided by 14th April as requested. A final decision on the FBC is expected in June 2022. Post FBC approval potential project / programme ideas and business cases for those projects that could be funded through retained business rates will be assessed and prioritised according to their delivery of wider Thames Freeport objectives – levelling up and skills; innovation and net zero; and trade and investment.</p> <p>Seed Capital Projects</p> <p>Seed capital projects are those that support the accelerated operationalisation of the tax sites. Government has allocated c.£25m to each Freeport for seed capital projects (subject to FBC approval). The Thames Freeport proposed seed capital projects are aligned with the Government’s freeport prospectus and have been developed to accelerate activity in areas of underdeveloped land.</p>	<p>Explanation of any Amber or Red RAG Statuses (including any decisions, direction or actions required):</p> <p>Risk – given scale and complexity, alongside government guidance continuing to evolve, there is a risk of impact on the deliverables due to an unforeseen change in policy. This, and all other risks, are being monitored through continued engagement with government and mitigations outline within the risk register for the programme.</p> <p>Time – Any delay in the approval of the Freeport Business Case by Government could have a knock-on effect on the delivery of seed capital projects, potentially increasing the lead times for new potential tenants, job creation and wider investment to support regeneration / levelling up.</p>

Project Status (What is going well/not going well):	Description of RAG Status and Key Project Decisions/Direction/Action:
<p>Business cases for the seed capital projects are underway. Current timetable is Tilbury and London Gateway business cases will be completed by the end of July for consideration and approval by the Accountable Body.</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 continue to be 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

Report Date:	June 2022	Decisions Required:	Endorsement of the South Essex Technical University Business Case and Financial Model Agreement to commit £60,000 of ASELA funding in 2022/23 to enable the appointment of advisers to continue to move the project forward
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) aims to enhance the delivery of higher-level technical skills in South Essex, to provide opportunities for local people to secure high-skill jobs; supporting local firms to secure the skills they need to grow; and support the retention / attraction of high quality firms into the area. SETU seeks to provide skills programmes to support employed learners, new career entrants and employees needing to reskill.

Key messages contained in the Full Business Case

Key messages contained in the Full Business Case are that:

- There is strong – and growing - market demand for higher-level technical skills in the area
- Business interest in strengthening the delivery of higher-level technical skills provision in the area is strong
- An incremental model to growing provision is the right approach to adopt – starting small and building over time
- Soft market testing has indicated there is interest from HE providers in helping to deliver this provision
- There is a requirement to establish a new operating company to procure an HE provider to deliver this provision
- Whilst funding is needed to prime the establishment of this new operating company, there is a sustainable financial model for delivering this provision

The process for developing the Full Business Case

This is a business led venture, which has been developed through a close co-operation between ASELA members and a number of the leading businesses across South Essex (including Ford, Southend Airport, Leonardo, DP World and Olympus). In order to oversee the development of the Full Business Case (FBC) for the South Essex Technical University, a Partnership Board was established, which included senior representation from these five main sponsoring firms and ASELA members.

Hatch was appointed to develop the Full Business Case for SETU, using funding secured from ASELA, Essex County Council and a number of private sector sponsors.

The Project Initiation Document (PID) to develop the Full Business Case was approved by the Partnership Board and a smaller, focused Executive Group was formed to act as the Contract Manager during delivery. The Executive Group (made up of representatives from Basildon Council, Essex County Council, Thurrock Council and Blue Marble) met on fortnightly basis. ASELA Chiefs have been appraised on the progress of the project throughout its development and the final Full Business Case for SETU was signed off by the Partnership Board in March 2022.

Following the approval of the Full Business Case by the Partnership Board, letters of commitment have been sought from the main business supporters to confirm their continued commitment to the project and encourage them to commit to provide an agreed number of learners from September 2023 onwards. These learner numbers are broadly consistent with the targets set out in the Full Business Case, with some employers indicating they could supply more if the planned curriculum offer was expanded further (to encompass other provision). In addition to the main supporters, we have also started to extend the business engagement further, to reach out to a number of other large firms in South Essex.

The proposed business model

The university will train people in the higher-level, vocational, technical skills that major employers in this region need now and into the future. It will focus on degrees, degree-level apprenticeships and short-course continuing professional development (CPD) in highly vocational subjects, such as mechanical, electrical, and software engineering, automation, logistics, management and leadership. The Business Case has demonstrated there is a clear need for advanced technical skills in the region and this demand is set to grow with the impact of a range of major projects in the region (i.e., Thames Freeport etc.) and the growth of high value industries.

The South Essex Technical University will support local businesses to address current and future technical skills gaps and skill shortages; improve the employability of South Essex workers; and help retain existing business and attract new employers and new talent to South Essex. The Business Case is not advocating building an institution – we are building a partnership with major businesses and an existing HE provider to shape and deliver a coherent, distinct course offer. The precise ways in which the courses will be delivered and from where, will depend on the HE provider we procure.

Through the combined efforts of the ASELA councils, convening major businesses in the region and with some public money to get a team and resources to kick-start the project, the technical university aims to start offering courses in September 2023. Starting with a small cohort of learners supported by local employers as degree apprentices, the technical university will grow incrementally.

The technical university is employer-led and focused, with a strong commitment to supporting inclusive growth and improving life chances of South Essex residents. The employers will use their apprenticeship levies to fund learners on degree apprenticeships. They are committing to support learners because they need employees with these skills. Courses will also be added that will upskill existing employees, keeping them in rewarding jobs in the local area and reducing the need for employers to run expensive recruitment programmes.

The programme aims to reach into the school system to encourage students from communities that would not historically have considered higher skills as attainable. We are working with schools, students and families across South Essex to raise awareness of the value of technical skills, the opportunities for rewarding careers in the region and to recruit learners from communities and families who have not traditionally considered higher education. As the technical university grows it will be able to offer bursaries and

scholarships to enable a wider group of local people to benefit from the growth of jobs requiring technical skills in the region, which will come from initiatives like Thames Freeport and the growing advanced manufacturing sector in the A127 corridor.

The technical university will be an important contributor to levelling up South Essex. As the Government's Levelling Up White Paper says, *"improving productivity, and spreading prosperity, crucially depends on enhancing people's education and skills"* and stresses the importance of putting local employers at the heart of skills provision.

An evolving governance model

Over the next six months or so, we envisage this Partnership Board will evolve to become a new Operating Company, Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status. The operating company will procure the HE provider to deliver the planned courses. A new Board of Trustees will be needed to oversee the activities of the Operating Company, with the precise governance model needing to be worked on over the next few months (with the support of our chosen legal advisers). Wider business interests (i.e., SME companies that want staff trained) will be captured through the establishment of an Advisory Council.

In June 2022, the Exec Group evolved into a Programme Team, adopting a robust programme management structure to oversee the delivery of the mobilisation plan. This mobilisation plan is structured around four key workstreams:

- WS1: Business Planning, Funding & Stakeholder Management
- WS2: Company Formation
- WS3: Establishing Advisory & Core Team
- WS4: Procurement of HE Provider

The proposed financial model and the need for public funding to pump prime the establishment of the operating company

The proposed financial model is one that is viable and sustainable for both the Operating Company and the HE partner. After initial pump-priming to commence delivery, the Operating Company is expecting to deliver financial surpluses and also annually increase the funding of educational projects and bursaries across South Essex.

The commercial position of the appointed HE provider is also viable and sufficiently attractive to ensure tenderers interest in bidding to deliver the provision. The successful HE partner is forecast to generate a surplus over direct costs of over £2.7m over 8 years, which is sufficient to recover their initial contract mobilisation costs.

The HE provider is forecast to receive revenue streams from tuition fees, CPD course delivery and business activity and consultancy. Through the contract with the HE provider, the new Operating Company will receive a share of revenues annually (assumed to be a 5% share of all applicable revenues from the HE provider). If the HE Provider delivers the provision as set out in this business case, there will be annual growth in the income that the Operating Company receives. This will enable the Operating Company to gradually increase its funding capability for education projects and initiatives over time, such as bursaries and scholarships. The growth in income is predominately achieved by the annual growth in the degree apprenticeships and honour degrees.

That said;

- The project requires £60,000 of funding from ASELA in 2022/23 to enable the continued delivery of the mobilisation plan. This funding will be match funded by a £75,000 contribution from Essex County Council and a £20,000 contribution from OSE and will enable us to bring in the external legal, HE and procurement expertise to establish the Operating Company and procure an HE provider.
- The Operating Company will also need financial support in its early years, in the form of capacity funding. The business model proposes using retained business rates funding to create this capacity, and early discussions with the Thames Freeport and Thurrock Council (as the Accountable Body for the Thames Freeport) in this regard have been broadly positive so far. This public funding is needed to underwrite the establishment of the technical university until it begins to generate a surplus after its initial years.

Recommendation

A presentation will be made to the ASELA Informal Joint Committee on the 16/06/2022 and the ASELA Formal Committee on 14/07/2022, seeking:

- Members endorsement of the current Full Business Case for the South Essex Technical University
- Members agreement to commit £60,000 of ASELA funding in 2022/23 to enable the appointment of advisers to continue to move the project forward

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 ASELA Joint Committee approve the Full Business Case in July 2022.

Programme Resources

As set out above, the current mobilisation plan that has been developed points towards the need for £155,000 of funding being needed to progress the next phase of the project (i.e., the establishment of the Operating Company and the procurement of an HE Provider).

At the time of writing, we have secured £75,000 from Essex County Council and £20,000 from Opportunity South Essex to ensure momentum is maintained. ASELA funding of £60,000 in 2022/23 will enable us to commission the external expertise we need to secure the external expertise we need to establish the Operating Company and commission the HE provider.

In addition, we continue to talk to the Thames Freeport and Thurrock Council (as the Accountable Body for the Thames Freeport) about them potentially providing the pump-prime funding required in the first two years of the life of the Operating Company to capitalise its start-up costs.

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 the Board endorsing the Full Business Case.</p> <p>A presentation will be made to the ASELA Informal Joint Committee on the 16/06/2022 and the ASELA Formal Committee on 14/07/2022, seeking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members endorsement of the current Full Business Case for the South Essex Technical University Members agreement to commit £60,000 of ASELA funding in 2022/23 to enable the appointment of advisers to continue to move the project forward. <p>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 ASELA Joint Committee approve the Full Business Case in July 2022.</p>	Scope	GREEN
	Risk	GREEN
	Issue	GREEN
	Cost	AMBER
	Time	GREEN
	<p>Explanation of any Amber or Red RAG Statuses (including any decisions, direction or actions required):</p> <p>Amber Cost – £60,000 of funding is needed from ASELA in 2022/23 to enable the appointment of advisers to continue to move the project forward, to create the Operating Company and appoint an HE provider. Discussions continue with the Thames Freeport and Thurrock Council (as the Accountable Body for the Thames Freeport) to provide the funds needed to ‘pump-prime’ the Operating Company from retained business rates. Endorsement is required from the ASELA Joint Committee on the Full Business Case and the commitment of £60,000 of ASELA funding in 2022/23 to enable the project to move forward.</p>	

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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 14 July 2022	ITEM:
ASELA Joint Committee	
Communications update	
Report of: Adrian Wardle	
Programme Implementation Director: Karen Wheeler	
Accountable Programme SRO: Lyn Carpenter	
This report is final	

Executive Summary

This paper provides an update on the communications work done in support of ASELA and in particular the five key programmes since the committee last met in February.

1. Recommendation(s)

That the Joint Committee:

- 1.1 notes the update provided in this report
- 1.2 considers and shapes the key messages contained in section 3 of the report.

2. Introduction and background

- 2.1 ASELA has continued to enjoy a good profile during the last period through external recognition (awards, conferences, etc) and has increased its social media following. Proactive opportunities featuring spokespeople have been more limited during the pre-election period. As the five programmes all move increasingly into delivery mode the number of opportunities for positive promotion and engagement will increase.
- 2.2 Widening the group of advocates for ASELA and its programmes will be an important focus in the coming months – particularly in the member and MP circles and with the wider business community across South Essex, working with colleagues in Opportunity South Essex.

- 2.3 We will look for opportunities to build the profile of ASELA, its programme of work and its achievements through conferences and speaking opportunities.

3. Developing the communications and engagement strategy

- 3.1 Following the committee's endorsement of the communications approach, further work has been done to flesh out key messages and proof points for those messages for ASELA. The committee is asked to consider these and comment.

- 3.2 ASELA key messages:

These are what as a minimum we would want someone to take away from a presentation or an interview...

1. South Essex is a major economy and destination, similar in size to the West of England, North of Tyne or Tees Valley combined authority areas
2. By making more of our assets, our proximity to London and the Thames through which we are connected to the trading world, we can become one of the most prosperous regions in the UK
3. The seven councils that make up the Association of South Essex Local Authorities are working together to make South Essex the place to live, visit and do business.

And these are the proof points for these key messages, that back those key messages up and can be used when the opportunity arises to expand on the key messages.

1. South Essex is a major economy and destination, similar in size to the West of England, North of Tyne or Tees Valley combined authority areas
 - With 800,000 people and 32,000 businesses, four major ports and an international airport, South Essex is a major economy
 - With 100 miles of coastline, a variety of natural landscapes, including woodland, parkland, wetland and marshland, and the longest pleasure pier in the world, South Essex offers many leisure and tourism opportunities
2. By making more of our assets, our proximity to London and the Thames through which we are connected to the trading world, South Essex can become one of the most prosperous regions in the UK
 - We have bags of talented, enterprising and creative people
 - Our 32,000 enterprises already provide more than 354,000 jobs

- The opportunities to increase trade through the river and enterprise by the river are enormous
 - South Essex is perfectly positioned to absorb growth out of London
3. The seven councils that make up the Association of South Essex Local Authorities are working together to make South Essex the place to live, visit and do business.
- We are tackling challenges that the individual councils can't solve alone
 - We are a collective and effective voice speaking up for South Essex
 - We have identified the five programmes of change that will have the greatest impact across the area, and that can be delivered over the coming years. These five programmes include two that are private sector-led and cover the environment, skills and jobs, infrastructure, housing and digital connectivity
 - We have significant support and backing from the area's businesses and major employers and are delivering what they and our communities need for strong, inclusive growth.

4. Content update

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

- [ASELA enters into strategic place partnership with Homes England](#)
- [Scrap overhead and go offshore, ASELA Leaders tell National Grid in response to East Anglia GREEN proposals](#)
- [Help make South Essex a creative leader](#)
- [Green and Blue Infrastructure study shortlisted for Royal Town Planning Institute award](#)
- [New project seeks to fill empty shops and offices across South Essex](#)
- [South Essex councils choose arts organisation to lead regional cultural work](#)
- [Setting out the LTC road to local benefits and key programme highlights](#)

4.2 We have issued a further two newsletters to members across all authorities, MPs, businesses and wider stakeholders.

5. Channels update

5.1 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>April-May-June 2022</i>	<i>+/-</i>
Website	1,900 users	+79%
	2,600 sessions	+61%
LinkedIn	33 new followers	-39%
	366 followers	+10%
Twitter	8 impressions a day	-46%
	51 followers	+6%

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	LTC funding bid result Taking of service procurement Sheltered accommodation pilot Public and community sites online (develop testimony stories)	June 2022 Jul/Aug 2022 Summer 2022 Summer 2022
SEEPARK	RTPI award announcement Creative and cultural sector engagement	June 2022 June 2022
South Essex Technical University	Partnership Board meetings Operating company formation HE partner procurement Business engagement	June, July, October 2022 Summer 2022 Autumn 2022 Autumn 2022
Thames Freeport	Approval of full business case	July 2022
Infrastructure and Housing	Joint Strategic Framework engagement	Autumn 2022
Programme-wide opportunities	ASELA Joint Committee MP engagement	14 July Autumn 2022