



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

Date: Thursday, 23rd March, 2023

Place: Council Chamber, Brentwood Borough Council

Present: Councillor C Hossack (Brentwood Borough Council) (Chair)
Councillors A Baggott (Basildon Borough Council), M Coxshall (Thurrock Borough Council) and S George (Southend-on-Sea City Council)

In Attendance: A Hutchings (Castle Point Borough Council), S Logan (Basildon Borough Council), J Stephenson (Brentwood Borough Council) and Rochford District Council), A Richards, E Helm and S Tautz (Southend-on-Sea City Council), T Walker (Essex County Council), K Wheeler (Thurrock Borough Council)
A Bryan (South East Local Enterprise Partnership)

Start/End Time: 11.30 am - 1.50 pm

21 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Bentley (Leader - Essex County Council), Councillor D Blackwell (Leader - Castle Point Borough Council), Councillor S Wootton (Leader - Rochford District Council), P Glading (Opportunity South Essex (Co-opted Member)) and R Polkinghorne (Chief Executive - Southend-on-Sea City Council).

The Joint Committee was advised that A Bryan (South East Local Enterprise Partnership) was in attendance at the meeting on behalf of P Glading.

22 Declarations of Interest

The following interest was declared at the meeting:

(a) Councillor M Coxshall - Agenda Item 8 (Future Business Engagement Arrangements) - Member of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

23 Appointment of Vice-Chair

On the nomination of Councillor C Hossack and with the unanimous support of the Joint Committee:

Resolved:

That Councillor A Baggott be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee for the duration of the meeting.

24 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 5 December 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

25 ASELA Programme Review and Reset

The Joint Committee considered a report of S Logan proposing the adoption of five new ASELA workstreams to incorporate relevant existing work into a framework for future activity, following the development of a revised work programme by the Leaders and Chief Executives of the ASELA local authorities.

S Logan reported that Leaders and Chief Executives had also identified that it was necessary to review the resourcing of the work programme to enable the next phase of its delivery and the evolution of ASELA and had therefore also developed a revised resourcing structure to support the delivery of the programme, which could be implemented on a cost neutral basis.

The Joint Committee was advised that it was also proposed that a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge be undertaken to build on the revised programme and resourcing framework of work and support understanding of the issues that ASELA should consider and develop further.

Resolved:

1. That the achievements delivered by the ASELA Programme to date, be recognised.
2. That the proposed new workstreams, Leader and Chief Executive sponsors and emerging strategic visions be endorsed, and that the relevant Chief Executives define these further in consultation with the respective Leader sponsors for consideration at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.
3. That the proposed resourcing structure to support the delivery of the revised ASELA Programme as set out in the report be agreed and that Chief Executives progress its implementation.
4. That the proposed undertaking of a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge of ASELA be endorsed and that the scope of the review be agreed by the Chair of the Joint Committee.

26 Existing Programme Progress Reports

(a) South Essex Advanced Technical Skills (SEATS)

The Joint Committee considered a report of S Logan with regard to the delivery of the private sector led technical university for South Essex, setting out the progress made since the last meeting of the Joint Committee and the key next steps in the delivery of SEATS.

S Logan confirmed that the results of the procurement process for the appointment of a higher education provider for SEATS, would be reported to all members of the Joint Committee by June 2023. The Joint Committee was also advised that a media release on the progress of SEATS was to be released imminently.

Resolved:

1. That the progress and achievements to date in respect of the delivery of a private sector led technical university for South Essex, be noted.
2. That the key next steps for the delivery of the technical university, be noted.

(b) Good Homes Programme

The Joint Committee received a presentation from J Stephenson with regard to the reset of the former Housing and Infrastructure programme and the progress currently made to deliver new homes and communities and the increased supply of high-quality housing, alongside arrangements for future programme delivery by local authorities and housing associations and details of the funding for the programme received from Homes England.

The Joint Committee suggested that efforts should be made to ensure close working with registered social landlords as part of the delivery of the Good Homes programme.

Resolved:

1. That the progress and achievements to date in respect of the delivery of new homes and communities and the increased supply of high-quality housing, be noted.
2. That the slide pack from the presentation be circulated as part of the minutes of the meeting.

(c) Superfast Digital Programme

The Joint Committee received a report of R Polkinghorne with regard to progress on the delivery of affordable full fibre digital connectivity across South Essex.

Members requested that future reports to the Joint Committee on the delivery of full fibre digital connectivity should contain a map of current progress on full fibre roll-out, those public sector sites where connectivity had already been achieved and he previously identified 'not spots' across the region.

Resolved:

1. That the progress and achievements to date in respect of the delivery of affordable full fibre digital connectivity for South Essex be noted.
2. That continued support on the delivery of the Superfast Digital programme be endorsed.

The Joint Committee received a report providing a summary of the current financial position for the delivery of the ASELA key programmes.

It was reported that, based on the latest forecast position, a £149,000 surplus was anticipated in 2022/23 that primarily related to alternative funding being secured to fund a Programme Manager position for ASELA and that, as a result, this would bring the reserve deficit down to £24,000 which will be carried forward into to 2023/24.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

28 Communications Update and Future Working Arrangements

The Joint Committee considered a report providing an update on the approach to communication activity following the review and re-set of the ASELA vision and priorities, including the proposed sharing of responsibility for communications across each of the ASELA local authorities.

Members were advised that it was intended to develop an overarching communication strategy following the re-set, to cover the key elements set out in the report and to increase awareness and engagement with ASELA and the current work programme. The Joint Committee noted that it was intended that the draft communication strategy would be presented to the next meeting for consideration and indicated that it was important that the strategy should contain appropriate arrangements to ensure that agreed communications adequately reflected the views of individual ASELA local authorities where necessary.

The Joint Committee was advised that, following feedback received from Leaders, a variation of the ASELA logo had been created to remove reference to '2050', as many of the current priorities for South Essex had more ambitious and shorter timescales.

Resolved:

1. That the communications update set out in the report and the proposed direction of travel for future ASELA communications activity, be noted.
2. That the proposed development of an overarching communication strategy for ASELA, including visual content (e.g., maps, infographics and videos as part of communications plans for specific workstreams) and the introduction of new communications channels such as TikTok, be agreed.
3. That, going forward, the Chair of the Joint Committee act as the member-level communications lead for ASELA.
4. That appropriate ASELA communications be prepared in respect of the current position with regard to the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and the expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in London, given the impact of these policy matters on South Essex.

29 Any Other Business

The following additional item of business was raised at the meeting.

(a) Greater Essex Devolution Proposal

The Joint Committee was advised that the Expression of Interest for consideration of a devolution 'deal' to be submitted by the three upper-tier local authorities in Essex, was to be considered by Southend-on-Sea City Council on 23 March 2023.

30 Last Meeting of the Municipal Year

The Chair expressed his best wishes for the future success of ASELA, as he was not standing for re-election at the local elections in May 2023.

On behalf of all Leaders and Chief Executives, Councillor A Baggott thanked the Chair for his contribution to the success of ASELA so far and the work of the Joint Committee since its establishment in 2021.

31 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business set out below (Future Business Engagement Arrangements), on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

32 Future Business Engagement Arrangements

The Joint Committee Considered a report with regard to future business engagement arrangements in South Essex.

The Committee received a letter from the co-opted Chair of Opportunity South Essex who was unable to be in attendance at the meeting, with regard to the issues set out the report.

Resolved:

1. That current arrangements for business engagement in South Essex and the associated matters and options set out in the report, be noted.
2. That recent discussions between the Chair of the Joint Committee and the Chair of Opportunity South Essex, be noted.
3. That detailed consideration be given to business engagement arrangements in South Essex, with the preferred option being to evolve the current federated board arrangements to strengthen the engagement of ASELA with Opportunity South Essex businesses and to invite businesses to more closely align with the new workstreams.

4. That detailed proposals for future business engagement arrangements in South Essex be presented to the next meeting of the Joint Committee, along with an appropriate transition plan.

A SELA JOINT COMMITTEE GOOD HOMES PROGRAMME UPDATE



16th March 2023



ASELA JOINT COMMITTEE GOOD HOMES PROGRAMME

Contents

- Programme Reset
- Achievements
- Delivery Plan – including Local Authorities and Housing Associations Workstream
- Funding

PROGRAMME RESET





Vision

To deliver high quality places to live, work, visit and invest that reflect and enhance the best of what our towns, countryside and coast have to offer.

To provide an increased supply of high-quality housing to meet the full range of housing needs in sustainable locations across South Essex.





Strategic Place Partnership (SPP) with Homes England

Homes England and ASELA have identified 3 Strategic Outcomes for the SPP. These outcomes are based upon the housing need within ASELA, the opportunities and challenges that are faced and the ambition for delivery.

The outcomes respond to the local challenges faced in South Essex and build upon the existing collaborative approach to working between Homes England and ASELA. The outcomes place value on the success and value of this new way of working, as well as the step change anticipated in the delivery of housing growth in South Essex.



The three Strategic Outcomes are:

1. Collective view of housing delivery opportunities across ASELA and what is required to unlock them
2. Targeted place-based engagement and resource alignment around priorities with key partners, both local and national
3. Accelerated new homes delivery to support the housing needs of South Essex

ASELA GOOD HOMES PROGRAMME

STRATEGIC THEMES AND WORKSTREAMS



Joint Committee identified three strategic themes. The programme workstreams are designed around the three strategic themes



ASELA Joint Committee

- Provide overall accountability and decision making for the programme
- Responsible for the Housing Delivery Plan
- Overall accountability for the Housing Programme

Good Homes Programme Board

- Approve the Strategic Place Partnership business plan and yearly Delivery Plan
- Drive place-based delivery of ASELA housing targets and SPP outcomes
- Agree ASELA spatial and thematic priorities
- Align Homes England and ASELA resources in South Essex
- Articulate the funding and resource that will unlock housing growth
- Collaboration with other key delivery partners and involving new partners to support the delivery of the ambition

Good Homes Working Group

- Progress the SPP Delivery Plan
- Operational activity on the programme workstreams
- Progression of housing sites pipeline
- Shared knowledge / skills
- Consideration of emerging topics – such as MMC

ACHIEVEMENTS





ASELA GOOD HOMES PROGRAMME

STRATEGIC PLACE PARTNERSHIP



Achievements in year 1

- ✓ Setting up of Strategic Place Partnership, including signing the MOU and draft Business Plan
- ✓ Joint Strategic Framework drafted
- ✓ Pipeline of housing sites identified and profiled used to engage with HE for funding opportunities
- ✓ Five stalled sites identified as a priority and a package of work agreed for each to accelerate delivery. The sites have the potential to deliver 548 homes (164 affordable).
- ✓ Monthly and bimonthly reporting to HE and ASELA Board
- ✓ Housing and Infrastructure Programme Director post agreed, funded and filled on interim basis (to October 23)
- ✓ Digital Twin large settlements 1st stage report drafted
- ✓ Local Authority and Housing Association workstream in progress, working in partnership to deliver affordable housing projects across three demonstration projects.

INDICATIVE DELIVERY PLAN





Workstream	Purpose	Potential activities	Intended Outcomes (Inc. Strategic Outcomes)
Strategic Place Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment of Homes England and ASELA strengths and resources on shared strategic housing delivery priorities and outcomes Utilise ASELA governance arrangements for the SPP, to direct and monitor the alignment of key resources To co-ordinate engagement with relevant partners, ensuring consistency of message and efficient use of resources for SPP and partners, including LA's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance structure and ToR for meetings Approve SPP Business plan and yearly delivery plan Establish reporting framework Monitoring and measurement of outcomes and impact Stakeholder engagement plan Strategic Partner AHP funding programme engagement Review resourcing requirements 	<p>Board structure and scheme of delegations established / refreshed and embedded in ASELA and Homes England</p> <p>Resource agreed by ASELA partners to support governance</p> <p><i>SPP Strategic Outcome 3 – accelerate and increase delivery of housing</i></p>
Joint Strategic Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Strategic Framework for development up to 2038 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsement of Joint Strategic Framework by Programme Board Engagement & subsequent adoption by Joint Committee 	<p>Published Strategic Framework for South Essex</p> <p><i>SPP Strategic Outcome 1 – collective view of housing delivery</i></p>
New Settlements Vision and Digital Twin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of the Vision, Stewardship proposals and development of a 'Digital Twin' for the 3 proposed new settlements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of New Settlement Digital Twin Report by Programme Board Identify next steps Explore opportunities for linked datasets and options to 'host' the digital twin. 	<p>Report on the vision for new settlements.</p> <p><i>SPP Strategic Outcome 1 – collective view of housing delivery</i></p>
Interface with other programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint working with other ASELA programmes (e.g. Freeport and TEGB) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify links with significant programmes e.g. Thames Estuary Growth Board and Freeport and build relationships with key individuals in these programmes. 	<p><i>SPP Strategic Outcome 2 – aligning resources with key partners</i></p>



Workstream	Purpose	Potential activities	Intended Outcomes (Inc. Strategic Outcomes)
Housing sites pipeline and acceleration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlocking the housing sites needed to support the forecast population and household growth Developing the pipeline of sites/ projects, including public sector land and strategic infrastructure, that will need support of the ASELA partners to accelerate delivery over the next 5 years Map existing funding/ investment and potential opportunities across ASELA/all government departments to enable alignment/ prioritisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree support for Tranche 1 priority sites for delivery in 22/23 Produce site specific support (e.g. business cases) Maintain pipeline of sites and explore options around mapping Validate the pipeline and assurance framework to assess sites Recommendations for Tranche 1 /2 sites Funding mapping 	<p>Priority sites enabled to start on site in 2024</p> <p>Pipeline of sites for delivery beyond 2024 agreed</p> <p><i>SPP Strategic Outcome 1 – collective view of housing delivery and single pipeline</i></p>
Local Authorities and Housing Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic partnership agreement between ASELA and HAs to increase delivery and focus on affordable homes with a single plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use collaborative approach for LA/HAs to create models for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASELA pipeline Regeneration scheme Settlements Identify key learning and future opportunities Delivery of demonstration sites Develop an MoU / partnership between ASELA and HAs. 	<p>Progress the demonstration sites into the delivery cycle by no later than April 2023.</p> <p>A new model for accelerating affordable housing delivery.</p> <p>Signed MoU between ASELA, HAs (and potentially other deliverers)</p> <p><i>SPP Strategic Outcome 2 – place-based engagement</i></p>
Engaging the Private Sector (inc SMEs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market Stimulation - development of a proposition targeted at house builders who are not currently operating in the area and MMC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market engagement with key developers Seek to agree MoU to encourage increased activity and presence in South Essex Agree protocol for promoting sites to SMEs 	<p>Signed Memorandum of Understanding with key organisations</p> <p><i>SPP Strategic Outcome 2 – aligning resources with key partners</i></p>
Delivery capacity across Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authority partners working collaboratively to increase capability and outputs Utilise the Homes England capacity funding offer to build and share knowledge, intelligence, skills, and capacity in key areas of development process with Local Authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the political and operational support for shared services and / or a collaborative delivery vehicle and what work would be needed to develop the business case for the proposal 	<p>Local Authority partners working collaboratively to ensure delivery capacity across South Essex</p> <p><i>SPP Strategic Outcome 3 – accelerate and increase delivery of housing</i></p>
Delivery Plan for Productivity, MMC and Low Carbon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish actions that will enable ASELA to increase local housing productivity (including MMC) and ensure that all new homes can meet the national Future Homes Standard and the target of net zero carbon by 2030. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HE to engage with government departments and partners for MMC and low carbon Agree preferred approach to low carbon homes and accelerating MMC in ASELA 	<p>Link to MMC activity in ASELA sub-region</p> <p><i>SPP Strategic Outcome 2 – place-based engagement</i></p>



Workstream	Purpose	Potential activities	Intended Outcomes (Inc. Strategic Outcomes)
Quality of existing homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint working to improve quality of existing housing stock across south Essex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities for improving existing stock including opportunities for retrofit, eg. develop Business Case for a pilot project for retrofit. Explore opportunities for an ASELA intervention on empty homes and under-occupation. 	Strategic Outcome 2 – place-based engagement

SPOTLIGHT ON HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS WORKSTREAM

As a core feature of transforming housing delivery in South Essex, it was agreed last year, to bring together the leadership teams of the Local Authorities, Regional Housing Associations and Homes England to consider innovative models of collective intervention in the market to get more homes built where they are needed.

Three major opportunities for delivery collaboration were identified. These were:

- To identify housing schemes in South Essex, that are currently stalled or deferred, but could be unlocked by leveraging the respective strengths of the strategic partners working in tandem.
- To identify and agree an area of South Essex for regeneration where the strategic partners could combine and use a housing scheme to anchor and accelerate the areas regeneration and levelling up programme.
- To take the work underway on new settlements in South Essex and bring forward a new model for accelerating affordable housing as a core feature of the overall proposition. This will describe the timescales and main activities required to successfully transform delivery on a larger scheme and scale.

These three areas have been used to design Phase 2 of the programme, the Governance Group overseeing the programme is the ASELA Good Homes Programme Board and a Solutions Team made up of all partners is meeting in between to develop the three work areas.

The Solutions Team have been focusing on the delivery of projects to demonstrate how the partnership can make a practical difference on the ground. They have also been considering how a 'partnership' could be formalized between the Local Authorities and Housing Associations. This is still in development but will help to shape the direction of this workstream April 2023 onwards.

FUNDING





ASELA GOOD HOMES PROGRAMME

STRATEGIC PLACE PARTNERSHIP



Funding Position

The delivery of such a comprehensive programme will require significant and recurring revenue and capital financial settlement. The greater the investment, the greater acceleration that can be delivered.

Certainty of funding is as important as scale. Therefore, the SPP will seek to create a transparent and consistent funding settlement that will underpin the delivery of the business plan. The Local Authority partners will consider contributing an agreed amount in an annual settlement.



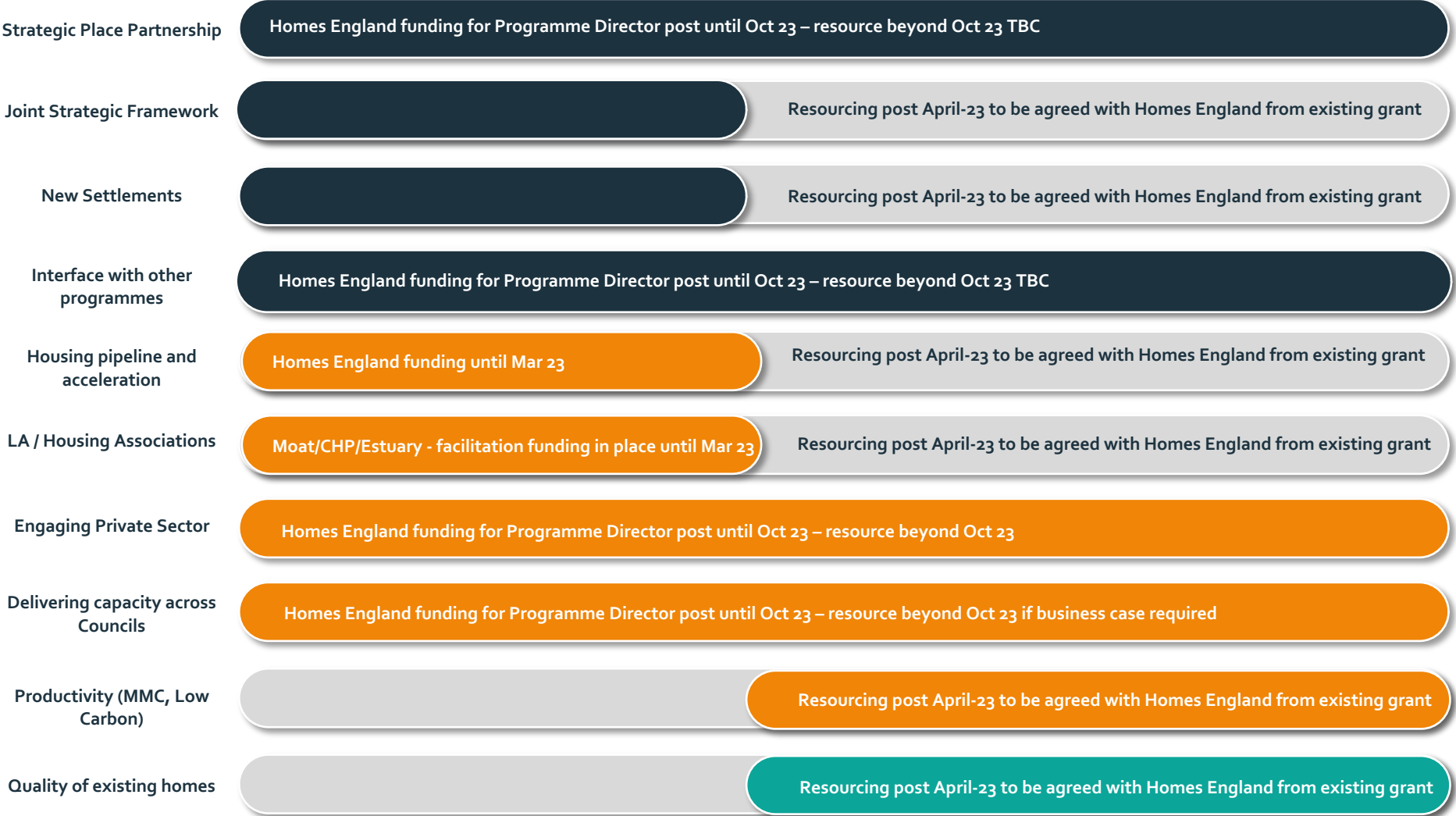
Homes England have committed funding to date as follows:

Grant Funding – Director Post	£250K	Until October 2023	Grant to ASELA
New Settlements Study	£250K	Until September 2022	Appointment via Homes England Multi-disciplinary framework
Grant Funding – Capacity funds for pipeline development	£120K	Until March 2023	Grant to ASELA
Technical Due Diligence on Priority Sites	£145K	Until March 2023	Appointment via Homes England Multi-disciplinary TDD Framework

ASELA GOOD HOMES PROGRAMME

Oct 22-Oct 23 CRITICAL TIMELINES / RESOURCING

Oct-22 Nov-22 Dec-22 Jan-23 Feb-23 Mar-23 Apr-23 May-23 Jun-23 Jul-23 Aug-23 Sep-23 Oct-23



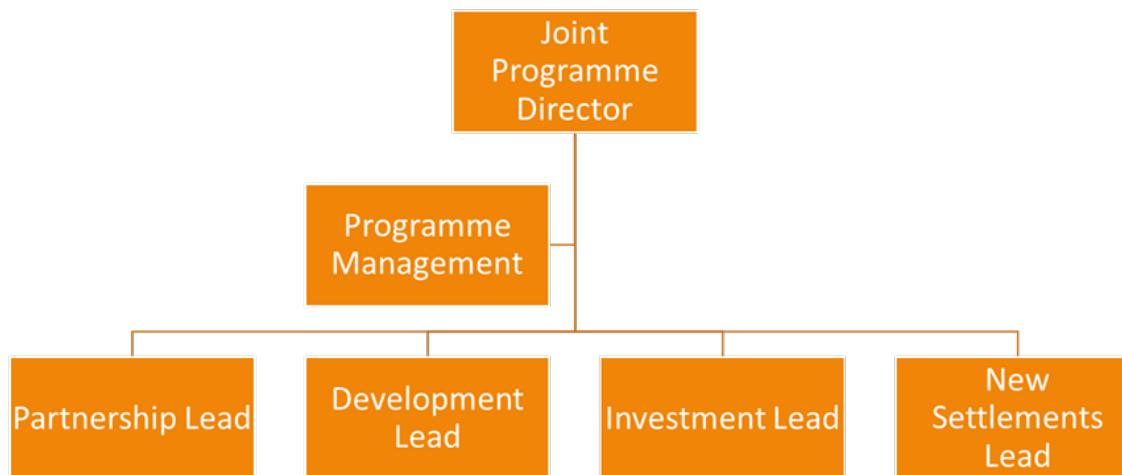
ASELA GOOD HOMES PROGRAMME

LONG TERM RESOURCING REQUIREMENTS



Post October 2023 we are proposing that a core team will need to be in place. The core team would manage, coordinate and oversee the range of fundamental activities required to deliver the programme. Posts could be full or part time dependent upon the volume of work. Individuals could be sourced from across the partnership. The teams beneath the leads could also grow to deliver a greater range of interventions as the programme progresses; this could include commissioned consultancy advice.

Proposed structure:



Certain strategic interventions would require the deployment of a specialist team to work with the Core Team; these could include Transport and Infrastructure, Affordable Housing and Planning and Governance.