

**SE2050 ASELA Meeting: 18/08/20 Time: 9am/10:50am**

**Present: Cllr R. Gledhill (RG) – Chair**

**Cllr C. Hossack (CH) – Vice-Chair**

**Cllr S. Wootton (SW), Cllr N. Smith (NS), Cllr G. Callaghan (GC), Cllr R Woodley (RW – substitute for Cllr Gilbert).**

**CEx: A. Griffin (AG), S. Scrutton (SS), J Stephenson, D. Marchant (DM), Karen Wheeler (KW – substitute for Lyn Carpenter)**

**Also present: R. Harris (RH) (Secretariat) and P Burkinshaw (PB)**

## **Minutes**

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Gilbert (sub: Cllr Woodley).

### **2. Update following LGR Summit held 31 July 2020**

An update from the LGR summit held on 31 July 2020 was provided.

Leaders discussed the announcement made by the Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the publication of a white paper on devolution of power across the country. Leaders also discussed ECC's position on devolution and the potential of creating one or more MCAs (and the potential creation of between two and four unitary authorities).

Leaders made the following comments/observations:

- Essex County Council's opposition to a South Essex MCA;
- Consent of all local authorities on any form of CA was required;
- Implications for district authorities (i.e. responsibilities for delivering children and adult social care functions and other statutory functions);
- Not in support/favour of a Greater Essex CA;
- ASELA greater and stronger as a whole – have the evidence base for investment and infrastructure package for the next 20-40 years – ASELA is the way forward SE;
- Fundamental questions – what does unitarisation in SE look like? Who to merge with, etc?

AGREED:

That the update from the LGR summit, be noted.

### **3. Response to Simon Clarke MP Letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

Leaders received a letter from Simon Clark MP dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020 setting out some of the principles in advance of the Government's forthcoming English Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper. Leaders also received a draft proposed response for consideration.

Leader discussed the proposed response and commented that the letter needs to be strengthened and provide a more robust response. Leaders also made a number of minor amendments and revisions to the response letter.

AGREED:

That the proposed response to Simon Clark MP be and any further comments be provided to the Chair for final sign-off and the response be submitted to the Minister by first week of September 2020.

#### **4. Next update report to Councils September 2020**

Leaders received and considered a report setting out the proposed basis and content of a further report from ASELA to each of the constituent authorities, following on from the report in July 2020.

Leaders made the following comments/observations:

- The next iteration of the report to constituent authorities to be considered at the next ASELA meeting on 3 September;
- Articulate in the report achievements to date (i.e. Full Fibre, Homes England, etc);
- Report needs to set out the alternatives and be more explicit on the options;
- Recognised that a specific and significant piece of work on governance will need to be commissioned;
- Need to articulate the opportunities of the ASELA (i.e. economic, infrastructure, etc);
- All Councillor briefings in the run up to the report being published need to be arranged by all constituent authorities – Communications will be significantly important in the coming weeks;

AGREED:

1. That the updates related to the last report from ASELA and action taken, be noted.
2. That the proposals for a Joint Committee and for a further report from ASELA in October (in some Council's will be a referral to Full Council), be noted.
3. That an objection be submitted to the ECC proposal for a Greater Essex CA with a preference for a smaller Combined Authority and to only 2 unitary authorities covering the county of Essex and the Leader of the relevant Council be authorised to work with Leaders of other Councils through ASELA, and other forums/means (including ECC) as necessary on this basis to secure 'the best deal' which is considered to be a smaller/more focused CA and 2 unitary authorities in South Essex.
4. That the benefits in co-commissioning of relevant research/activity related to CA's and local government reorganisation/unitary councils in South Essex, be noted and that this be co-ordinated through ASELA as appropriate.
5. That the draft ASELA report to constituent authorities be considered at the ASELA meeting on 3 September and it be noted that a further update report from ASELA will be presented in the autumn to the constituent authorities.

**3. Next Steps and Timeline**

Leaders received and considered the draft timeline for the period August to December 2020.

Leaders noted that the timeline was a working draft and would be reviewed and updated as required.

AGREED:

That the timeline be revised and updated accordingly.

**4. Date and time of next meeting**

Thursday 3 September 2020 at 9:15am