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## **ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH ESSEX LOCAL AUTHORITIES JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN - STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND**

### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report seeks agreement to a Statement of Common Ground (SCG) prepared by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) to support the preparation of a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South Essex. A copy of the SCG is appended to this report.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires public bodies to co-operate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries; the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) recently signed by the South Essex local authorities (Executive Minute 38/18 refers) reflects the principle of co-operation and recognises a new requirement for local authorities to prepare a SCG setting out joint working arrangements.
- 2.2 The MOU confirmed an intention to prepare a JSP for South Essex; work on the plan is progressing, initially funded through a Government Planning Delivery Fund grant. A key stage in preparing a joint plan is for the South Essex authorities to agree a SCG to establish the arrangements for effective co-operation.

### **3 BACKGROUND TO STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND**

- 3.1 Paragraph 179 of the current NPPF requires local planning authorities to work collaboratively to ensure that strategic priorities with neighbouring authorities are co-ordinated to take account of development requirements that cannot be wholly met within a single local planning authority's administrative boundary.
- 3.2 The Government's Housing White Paper 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market' (February 2017) set out arrangements for more effective joint working where planning issues go beyond individual authority boundaries through the preparation of a SCG.
- 3.3 It is anticipated the long awaited revisions to the NPPF will confirm a requirement for local planning authorities to prepare a SCG in order to meet three primary objectives:-
1. increasing certainty and transparency, earlier on in the plan making process, on where effective co-operation is and is not happening;
  2. encouraging all local planning authorities to co-operate effectively and seek agreement on strategic cross-boundary issues; and

3. helping local planning authorities demonstrate evidence of co-operation by setting clearer and more consistent expectations as to how co-operation in plan making should be approached and documented.

3.4 The SCG should provide the primary evidence of compliance with the Duty to Co-operate and establish a clear link between that and the assessment of whether a plan can be considered sound.

#### **4 DISCUSSION**

4.1 The benefits of working on a joint statutory strategic plan for South Essex, as opposed to solely working on individual local plans, can be summarised as follows:-

- Provide a more effective way of place-shaping, providing a bigger canvas to direct development to the right areas that deliver growth and that are (or can be) supported by the right infrastructure.
- Deliver potentially significant cost savings as a result of a combined plan making process (e.g. local plan examinations; public consultation and stakeholder engagement; evidence-base) and a more efficient and effective use of staff resources.
- Increase funding opportunities and secure wider support from Government, with a strong emphasis on joint plans in all Government bidding processes (e.g. the Housing Infrastructure Fund and Planning Delivery Joint Working Fund) and set the potential for a bespoke housing deal to deliver strategic infrastructure.
- Help local planning authorities manage housing delivery more effectively (e.g. the Government is proposing to allow Five Year Housing Land Supply and Housing Delivery Tests to be managed across strategic areas where there is a joint local plan in place).
- Provide a more robust and coherent basis for negotiating with the Greater London Authority/Mayor to ensure that there are mutual benefits arising from London's growth.
- Help deliver a technically sound and legally compliant local plan (e.g. by demonstrating that the 'duty to co-operate' has been met) through examination.

4.2 It is accepted the final version of the revised NPPF has yet to be published, but there is little doubt this will include the requirement for the preparation of a SCG. In any event, the SCG, as presented, provides a clear, coherent explanation of the arrangements for the preparation of the JSP.

4.3 It should be noted that the preparation of an SCG, as a component of the duty to co-operate, will be required for South Essex regardless of the intention to prepare a JSP.

4.4 The Planning Policy Sub-Committee is considering revisions to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) to reflect the timetable for the preparation of the JSP set out in the SCG.

## **5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The SCG will ensure the South Essex local planning authorities, including Rochford, can demonstrate effective on-going cooperation on strategic planning matters, thereby satisfying the duty to cooperate and to meet the new demands of the updated NPPF.

## **6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None.

## **7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None arising directly from the proposed SCG. However, the JSP will have environmental implications for South Essex and these will be considered through the plan making process and the supporting evidence base.

## **8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Initial work on the preparation of the JSP is being funded from a circa £900,000 grant from the Government's Planning Delivery Fund. A detailed appraisal of the cost requirements for completing the JSP is being prepared and will be reported to Council later in the year.

## **9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The requirement for neighbouring local authorities to prepare a SCG is set out in the draft revisions to the NPPF; it is anticipated the final version of the revised NPPF will be published by the Government by late summer 2018.

9.2 The duty to co-operate is a key component of plan making and is tested through public examination.

## **10 PARISH IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None.

## **11 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty required us to have regard:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
  - To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - To foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 11.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnerships, pregnancy/maternity.
- 11.3 The detailed equality and diversity implications from the JSP, to which the SCG applies, will be considered and reported through technical and sustainability appraisals of proposed policies and proposals.

## 12 RECOMMENDATION

- 12.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES** to approve the Statement of Common Ground prepared by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities as set out in the Appendix to this report, to guide the preparation of the Joint Strategic Plan for South Essex.



Shaun Scrutton  
Managing Director

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### Background Papers:-

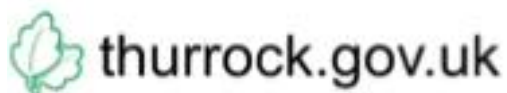
None.

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# South Essex Joint Strategic Plan

STATEMENT OF

## 1. Introduction

1.1 In February 2017, the Government introduced the proposition that all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) be required to prepare a ‘Statement of Common Ground’ (SCG) to help manage strategic planning matters across local authority areas and strengthen the Duty to Cooperate<sup>1</sup>. Further details of this proposal were set out in the consultation document, published in September 2017<sup>2</sup> and are now formally included in the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).<sup>3</sup> The Government’s objectives of the proposal are to:

- *increase certainty and transparency, earlier on in the plan-making process, on where effective co-operation is and is not happening;*
- *encourage all local planning authorities, regardless of their stage in plan-making, to co-operate effectively and seek agreement on strategic cross-boundary issues, including planning for the wider area’s housing need; and*
- *help local planning authorities demonstrate evidence of co-operation by setting clearer and more consistent expectations as to how co-operation in plan-making should be approached and documented.*

1.2 The requirement for a SCG will operate in tandem with two new proposed ‘tests of soundness’. These will be used at local plan examinations to ensure that there is not only a proactive and positive approach to strategic planning matters across housing market areas (as currently required by the Duty to Cooperate), but that there is a clear (and agreed) approach to how these will be delivered in all relevant local plans. The new tests will come into effect when the final version of the revised NPPF is published (currently anticipated by end of July 2018) and as currently proposed would require plans to be:

- a) *informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;*

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<sup>1</sup> Housing White Paper - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market> - Paragraph 1.9

<sup>2</sup> Planning for the right homes in the right places - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals> - Paragraphs 56 to 87

<sup>3</sup> A revised (draft) version of NPPF was published on the 5 March - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

*b) based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground.*

- 1.3 The South Essex LPAs of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, together with Essex County Council, have agreed to prepare a new Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for the area. Although the SCG will be prepared to support the Duty to Cooperate as required by national policy, it will also set out the project management arrangements for the JSP. This is an iterative process, however, and this first stage SCG is being used by the Authorities as a ‘pre-commencement’ document for the JSP.
- 1.4 The SCG will be agreed and signed by all seven partner authorities by the end of July 2018, initiating the formal process for preparing the JSP. At this point, individual LPAs will update their Local Development Schemes (LDS) to reflect the new portfolio approach to plan-making across the sub-region.

## **2. South Essex - the Place**

- 2.1 South Essex covers the local planning areas of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. It is strategically located on the edge of London and is well connected with several strategic roads linking communities within and outside South Essex. It is also an important national and international gateway, with three major ports on the Thames Estuary and London Southend Airport.
- 2.2 Its close proximity to London and its position on the Thames Estuary are major factors behind the historical growth of South Essex and these will continue to be major influences on its future growth and wider relationship with the rest of Essex. However, these locational advantages need to be managed effectively to ensure that the benefits and future opportunities arising from these advantages can be realised.
- 2.3 The growth offer in South Essex is therefore potentially significant, but there are a number of challenges in making sure that growth is healthy, inclusive and sustainable over the long term:
- Major investment in transport and other infrastructure is required if South Essex is to play its full role in delivering high quality growth which is befitting of its location neighbouring a World City;

- Weaknesses in business growth, the skills needed to maximise the opportunities provided by the diverse economic base and the entrepreneurial spirit of South Essex residents will need to be addressed;
- Whilst the quality of life for many is high, there are significant inequalities within some communities, and as such growth must be inclusive;
- There is space to grow across South Essex but there are challenges around ensuring this happens in a way that enhances the environmental offer, particularly in terms of green space, air quality and impact on climate change.

2.4 These challenges are common across the sub-region and require strategic solutions but there are also more locally specific issues being addressed by individual councils through their own place-shaping role. Therefore a combination of strategic and local approaches is needed to ensure that South Essex is an area that is inclusive, economically successful, dynamic and environmentally sustainable.

### 3. South Essex District by District

#### 3.1 *Basildon*

Basildon Borough lies 30 miles east of the City of London covering an area of approximately 10,900 hectares and is home to 185,000 people and an economic base for over 90,000 jobs. The Borough's main urban areas are the New Town of Basildon (which includes Laindon and Pitsea), Billericay and Wickford. 63% of land is designated Metropolitan Green Belt outside these areas.

3.2 The Council has identified specific ambitions which the Borough's Local Plan and JSP will contribute to delivering by helping to create well planned, attractive communities that are linked to services and job opportunities. Working with other South Essex Authorities, the Council's ambitions are to:

- support the educational and skill improvement of local people to ensure they can benefit more inclusively from growth, whilst helping them realise their potential;
- support the expansion and regeneration of sustainable economic and commercial growth centres, supported by a locally available and skilled workforce;
- plan for sustainable housing growth, supported by appropriate infrastructure, delivered in a timely fashion;
- provide greater influence on planning and infrastructure decisions, whilst acting as a combined voice to attract investment from the Government and the private sector to



deliver sustainable growth;

- support the improvement of residents' health and wellbeing by conserving important natural and historic areas and planning for green infrastructure, health and cultural facilities alongside growth;
- plan for new and enhanced green spaces, protect and enhance wildlife, biodiversity, geodiversity, local landscape and priority habitats, and ensure a safer natural environment.

### 3.3 ***Brentwood***

Brentwood Borough is characterised by its village character, a “Borough of Villages” surrounding Brentwood market town at its heart, covering 15,100 hectares and home to 80,000 people. 89% of the Borough is designated Metropolitan Green Belt. Brentwood is ideally placed with high connectivity to London and wider transport networks, plus excellent access to surrounding countryside.

- 3.4 This ‘best of both worlds’ results in attractive places to live and work, and brings high land values. The proximity of the Borough to London means high levels of out-commuting, but the quality of local schools and other services attracts a high level of in-commuting too. There are however limited brownfield opportunities to accommodate increasing development needs. The Borough is further constrained in terms of its infrastructure and local services which are both at capacity. Balancing growth needs with the aim to maintain and enhance local character is therefore challenging.

### 3.5 ***Castle Point***

Castle Point is a relatively small local authority area just 4,500 hectares in size, with a population of 88,000 people. It sits at the heart of the South Essex sub-region on the northern bank of the Thames Estuary between the larger settlements of Basildon and Southend. It is these larger settlements, along with London, on which Castle Point relies for its employment, services and leisure opportunities. The key planning issues comprise:

- the challenge of meeting housing need in a borough of significant Green Belt and other environmental constraints and where land availability is confined to small scale infill sites in the built-up area;
- the need to improve infrastructure to address congestion, historic underinvestment and provide capacity for growth;

**3.6 Rochford**

Located on a peninsula between the River Thames to the south, the River Crouch to the north and the North Sea to the east, Rochford is a district rich in heritage and natural beauty covering an area of 16,800 hectares. The majority of the district's 85,000 residents are located in the more accessible western extent within the towns of Rayleigh, Hockley and Rochford. Smaller villages and hamlets are dispersed across the eastern, less accessible parts of the district.

3.7 Development opportunities within the existing urban areas to provide local jobs and homes are limited by a lack of suitable brownfield sites. Outside the urban areas, over 12,400 hectares is designated Metropolitan Green Belt; considerable parts of the district are also subject to other environmental constraints given its coastal nature.

3.8 The district's economic strengths lie primarily in its entrepreneurial character, with an abundance of successful small and medium sized businesses, coupled with the presence of London Southend Airport, a regionally important asset, which has led to the development of a new high-quality business park in the district. The district is accessible from London but challenges remain in terms of road and rail capacity providing adequate east to west, and north to south connectivity.

**3.9 Southend-on-Sea**

Southend-on-Sea is the eastern-most extremity of South Essex lying on the northern side of the Thames Estuary at the point where it meets the North Sea. It has a linear form lying along the coast, and is bordered to the north by Rochford and to the west by Castle Point.

3.10 Southend is a sub-regional centre for employment and retail provision in South Essex as well as a major tourist resort and leisure destination with over six million visitors a year. With a population of 179,800 in an area of approximately 4,100 hectares, Southend is a densely populated urban Borough with nine mainline railway stations and the international London Southend Airport. The predominant land use in Southend is residential, interspersed with mature parks and seven miles of foreshore fronting the Thames estuary to the south and east. Southend has four areas of metropolitan green belt within its administrative boundary, all of which form a small part of the extensive Green Belt separating settlements within South Essex.

3.11 Southend Borough Council's corporate vision is 'Creating a better Southend' and the Council is progressing its vision for 'Southend 2050'. The Southend Core Strategy

(2007), along with the Council's other Development Plan Documents, has been instrumental to date in delivering a step change in regeneration and growth within the Borough. The Council's vision for Southend and Southend 2050 aim to:

- maximise opportunities for sustainable housing growth, supported by appropriate infrastructure, in a Borough with limited land availability;
- deliver sustainable, economic growth, providing employment opportunities within the Borough and supporting the growth of London Southend Airport;
- promote and enhance the tourism, cultural and leisure offer, including visitor accommodation, and having regard to the assets offered by the area in order to attract greater visitor numbers and promote more overnight and longer stays.
- secure improvements to infrastructure capacity to address congestion, historic underinvestment and to provide capacity for growth;
- ensure residents have access to high quality education to enable them to be lifelong learners and have fulfilling employment;
- create sustainable communities that contribute to the health and well-being of residents, including planning for health, community and cultural facilities, as well as new and enhanced areas of green and open space;
- conserve and enhancing the historic environment and natural environment, including the biodiversity assets of the foreshore;
- support the growth and regeneration of the town, district and local centres to serve the local and sub-regional population.

### 3.12 *Thurrock*

Occupying 18 miles of riverfront and covering 16,300 hectares, Thurrock is situated on the northern side of the River Thames, 20 miles from central London. With a population of 157,000 which is forecast to rise to 200,000 by 2037, Thurrock comprises a diverse range of urban, rural and riverside environments, with over 65% of the Borough is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. Much of the riverside area within Thurrock is urbanised with a mixture of residential, industrial, and port related development at the western and eastern ends of the Borough. Thurrock is made up of a number of settlements including Grays, Stanford/Corringham, South Ockendon and Tilbury together with a number of villages in the Green Belt.

- 3.13 The main employment sectors in the Borough are transport and logistics, port functions and retail. The strength of these sectors reflects Thurrock's key locational advantages, which include its close proximity to London and international gateways which make it an attractive proposition for inward investment. A testament to this is the increasing levels of private sector

investment which has/will be generated by proposed or committed development at Purfleet, Lakeside, the Port of Tilbury, the new London Gateway super-port and Thames Enterprise Park.

3.14 Key place-shaping ambitions of the Council are to:

- Reduce inequalities and improve the attractiveness of the Borough as a place to live, work, visit and invest in.
- Deliver sustainable economic growth by meeting the land and property needs of business and Thurrock's major employers.
- Increase the scale and rate of housing delivery to meet the housing needs of all sections of the community.
- Maintain vibrant, prosperous and competitive town centres.
- Delivering the strategic and local infrastructure improvements required to support growth and the regeneration and health and well-being of local communities.
- Improve accessibility and encouraging sustainable travel.
- Maintain and protect the distinctive character and setting of the Borough and its historic built and natural assets.
- Protect and respect the key role of the River Thames as an economic, recreational and environmental asset.
- Address climate change and poor air quality.

#### **4. Essex County Council's role in the Partnership**

4.1 Essex County Council (ECC) is the strategic upper tier authority covering the county of Essex. To that end, ECC works closely with the districts and boroughs of Brentwood, Basildon, Castle Point and Rochford to provide several key public services and works in close partnership with Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock as neighbouring authorities that deliver against common aims and objectives. ECC is focussed on delivering inclusive economic growth, helping people get the best start in life and to age well, and to help create great places to grow up, work and live. Key to the achievement of these organisational priorities is ensuring that the key places and communities in South Essex feel the benefit of economic growth and sustainable development. As well as working closely with South Essex local authorities, ECC also works to support and influence regional and national partners, to deliver services and represent the best interests of the people of South Essex by:

- promoting economic growth, regeneration, infrastructure delivery, and sustainable new development;
- being a provider and commissioner of a wide range of local government services covering Brentwood, Basildon, Castle Point and Rochford including responsibility as the highways authority for the delivery of the Essex Local Transport Plan; Local Education Authority including early years and childcare; Minerals and Waste Planning Authority; Lead Local Flood Authority; lead advisors on Public Health and delivery of adult and children’s social care services and;
- being an infrastructure funding partner, supporting the delivery of strategic and local infrastructure to ensure the delivery of community outcomes.

## 5. The South Essex 2050 Ambition

**“South Essex: *the place to live, the destination to visit and the place for business to thrive*”**

### The Ambition

- 5.1 In the Autumn of 2017, the Leadership of South Essex Councils embarked upon a programme of work which would lead to a shared ‘place ambition’ and greater collaboration on strategic priorities to support long term growth. This was initiated in response to the recognition that there was a need to work more effectively on strategic planning matters across South Essex and maximise the, potentially significant, opportunities strategic collaboration could bring to the area. The Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) was established in January 2018 to take the lead in implementing the Ambition (see Annex 1).
- 5.2 The ‘South Essex 2050 Ambition’ sets out the opportunity for growth and development across the sub-region and the positive effect it will have on the economy, together with the right scale and type of infrastructure to support growth. Operating together, the South Essex strategic growth assets could provide the infrastructure for people and businesses to experience a fully connected place (nationally and internationally) where they can take advantage of the unrivalled potential on offer in one area – business growth, employment

opportunities, varied and interesting communities to live in and a rich diversity of cultural and recreational experiences to enjoy.

- 5.3 By 2050, the ambition is that all new development will be located in the most sustainable locations, will be of the highest quality, will support the emerging local industrial strategy priorities<sup>4</sup>, and will be well-connected by a fully integrated transport system and framework of green spaces. The current estimated need for housing across South Essex is 90,000 dwellings over the next 20 years<sup>5</sup>, but with the right conditions to support growth, more could be achieved. As part of the consideration of long term spatial options, the authorities are therefore exploring whether the development of new ‘Garden’ communities could offer a strategic solution to growth. The new communities could significantly enhance housing opportunities and community facilities for local people, and support new commercial and employment hubs, creating centres of business excellence within the sectors of industrial opportunity.

## 6. South Essex Strategic Areas of Opportunity

Five areas of strategic importance have been identified by ASELA as places that potentially offer the greatest potential to deliver the South Essex 2050 Ambition, with the right investment and leadership. The ‘Strategic Areas of Opportunity’ are:

### 6.1 *The River Thames and Thames Estuary*

The River Thames Estuary stretches along the Essex, Kent and London coastline, with around 40 miles being within South Essex. It is of both national and international importance with major port and tourism facilities as well as areas of nature conservation value. The aim is to maximise the economic potential of major visitor and recreational opportunities this offers South Essex and London, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural environment. In

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<sup>4</sup> The South Essex seven Local Industrial Strategy priorities are Advanced Manufacturing; Construction; Environmental Technologies and Energy; Digital and Creative Services; Finance and Business Services; Life Sciences and Healthcare; Transport & Logistics

<sup>5</sup> The South Essex Authorities estimate that up to 4,500 new homes will be needed each year to meet housing needs. However this will have to be assessed against the Government’s new proposed methodology for determining Local Housing Needs, due to be published by the end of July 2018.

addition, there is the potential to increase the opportunities the river offers for enhancing transport connectivity between South Essex and London.

**6.2 *London Southend Airport and surrounding area***

London Southend Airport offers major national and international connectivity and has the potential to further increase destination opportunities. Significant surface access improvements are essential to realise the full economic potential of the airport. The area surrounding the airport is currently being developed as a major business park facility and has the potential to unlock significant new business, employment and residential opportunities across the wider area.

**6.3 *The A127 Transport Corridor***

The A127 provides a strategic east to west transport route across the sub-region stretching from Southend to the London Borough of Havering (LBH) in east London with direct access to the M25, A130 and A13. It is not trunked and spans three Highway Authorities in respects of ownership and management and crosses five Local Planning Authorities along its route. The ASELA authorities and LBH have collectively prepared a Statement of Common Ground with regards to the issues for sustainable growth and plan making that the A127 Transport Corridor presents; and the Highway Authorities are developing a joint Implementation Plan as part of the A127 Corridor for Growth (the Route Management Strategy).

The route already experiences significant capacity issues, particularly at key junctions. With the right investment this strategic corridor has the potential to unlock significant new business, employment and residential opportunities. It will also help to deliver north to south connectivity improvements and further improved travel flow benefits across the area. These improvements will be key to realising the 'Strategic Areas of Opportunity', including Basildon Enterprise Corridor. the economic potential of London Southend Airport and Southend on Sea as a major resort and visitor destination.

**6.4 *Crossrail connectivity / A12/A129***

As part of the consideration of long term spatial options, the authorities are considering the potential for new 'Garden' communities. These and other economic opportunities in the sub-region would be dependent upon significant investment in improving its road and rail transport infrastructure. The opening of the Elizabeth Line through central London offers major advantages in terms of connectivity to the new 'Garden' communities, joining up business and employment opportunities as far afield as Reading, and for improving linkages between London Southend Airport to London City and Heathrow Airport.

**6.5 *Lower Thames Crossing, Thurrock Thameside and A13 Corridor***

The Lower Thames Crossing is a nationally significant new River Thames crossing linking the M2 in Kent and the A13 and M25 in Essex, offers the potential to unlock significant new business, employment and residential opportunities and improve travel flow benefits across the area. The scale of

benefits arising from the new infrastructure will be dependent on the ensuring the right junctions along the route through South Essex, particularly the A13 serving the south Essex ports.

Within Thurrock Thameside/A13 corridor there are significant opportunities to build upon the areas historic focus for industrial and port related activity to support future economic and housing growth. Capitalising on strategic access provided by the C2C Thameside line and the A13, this SAO includes the development of a range of new strategic housing locations; the creation of new town centres at Purfleet and Lakeside providing new retail and leisure facilities together with the delivery of 6,000 new homes; the regeneration of Grays and Tilbury Town Centres; the continued expansion of the Ports of Purfleet, Tilbury and London Gateway and strategic employment development at Thames Enterprise Park.

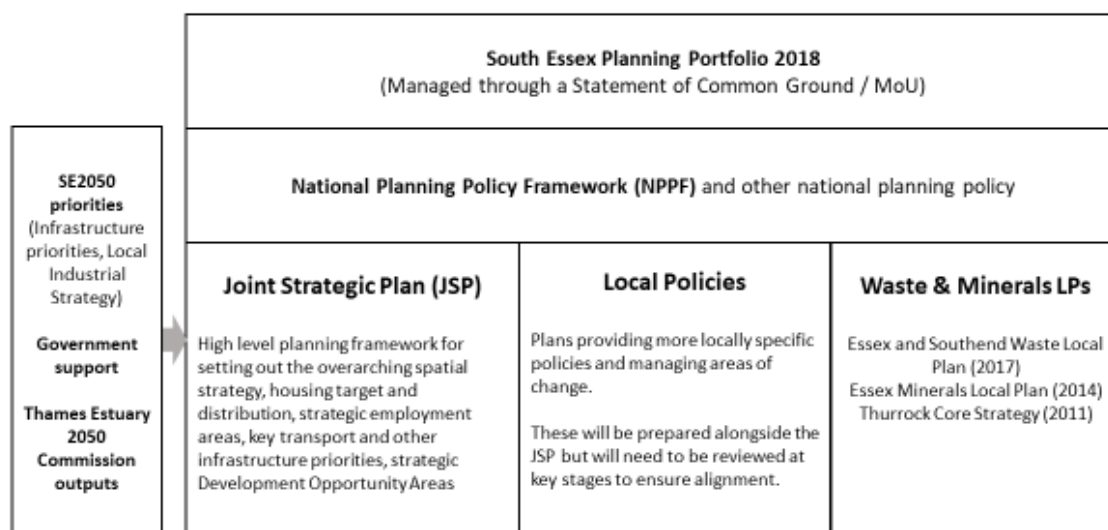
The potential extension of Crossrail 2, with an Eastern Branch extending into South Essex, has the potential to address capacity constraints at Fenchurch St Station and to improve connectivity into central London

## **7. Implementing the South Essex 2050 Ambition**

- 7.1 Implementation of the South Essex 2050 Ambition will be steered through ASELA and a number of inter-related workstreams have been initiated to facilitate this. These cover strategic infrastructure priorities, the production of a local industrial strategy and the implementation of the spatial strategy. This SCG sets out how the spatial strategy workstream will be implemented through a new local planning 'portfolio', with a Joint Strategic Plan providing the overarching framework within which more focused local development plans will be prepared (see Figure 4 below).
- 7.2 The JSP will also provide a reference framework for the preparation of a Strategic Transport Framework, sitting under the three current statutory Local Transport Plans (LTPs) and forming part of the JSP. The Strategic Transport Framework will be prepared by the three Highway Authorities for South Essex, namely Thurrock and Southend Unitary Authorities and Essex County Council, with partners including the LPAs.



Figure 4: The South Essex Planning Portfolio



## 8. Delivering the South Essex Planning Portfolio

### 8.1 *The Joint Strategic Plan*

The South Essex 2050 Ambition will be delivered over the next 30 years, with some of it fully realised within the timeframe of the current South Essex JSP (period 2018-2038). Other longer-term components will be included in future reviews of the JSP<sup>6</sup>, as the plan’s timeframe is rolled forward.

8.2 The JSP will provide the strategic context for the statutory development plan portfolio and will be prepared jointly by all LPAs and Essex County Council. Its scope will therefore be focused on the strategic policy matters that are common across all six local planning areas as follows:

- **South Essex Spatial strategy:** distribution of growth, town centre hierarchy and setting long term extent of the Green Belt
- **Strategic Areas of Opportunity (SAO)** and the role of each

<sup>6</sup> Regulations under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 require that Local Development Documents and Statements of Community Involvement are reviewed every five years to ensure that they remain relevant and up to date - [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/670593/Chief\\_Planner\\_Newsletter\\_-\\_December\\_2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/670593/Chief_Planner_Newsletter_-_December_2017.pdf)

- **Cross-cutting themes:** including promoting social cohesion; healthy and inclusive growth; high quality development and design; supporting sustainable development; climate change
- **Overall housing provision, distribution across SAO and housing needs**
- **Local industrial strategy priorities** and spatial implications (including strategic employment land allocations).
- **Strategic transport and infrastructure priorities**
- **Natural environment and resources**, including green and blue infrastructure
- **Climate change and energy**
- **Implementation and Monitoring Framework**

8.3 The South Essex Local Planning Portfolio will also rely on the policies set out in the national policy framework<sup>7</sup> and will therefore not duplicate any nationally set policies, unless there are specific local circumstances that justify a deviation from this. However, there may be a need for supplementary planning guidance in addition to the NPPF, to provide a local interpretation and implementation of national policy.

8.4 ASELA has agreed an accelerated timetable for preparing the plan given the urgent need to implement the shared ambition, building investor confidence and ensuring the right infrastructure is secured to support delivery of the strategic spatial and economic priorities. There are risks attached to delivery of the JSP within this timescale, however, particularly as it will be dependent on significant infrastructure investment. A risk assessment and management plan have therefore been prepared to help ensure that the agreed timetable is maintained and to support implementation of the JSP (see Section 6 and Annex 6).

8.5 Key milestones for preparing the JSP are set out below. A detailed work programme has also been agreed to help manage the preparation of the JSP across the seven local authorities involved and to ensure it continues to be treated as a priority by all involved.

February 2017: South Essex authorities agree to prepare Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Framework (through South Essex Strategic Planning Memorandum of Understanding) and commence exploratory projects, including South Essex 2050.

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<sup>7</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Policy for Travellers Sites (PPTS) and National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW)

## APPENDIX

- February 2018: Following completion of South Essex 2050, South Essex Authorities (including Brentwood) agree (through ASELA Memorandum of Understanding) to formally work together to prepare the JSP and develop a South Essex Local Planning Portfolio.
- July 2018: ASELA agrees first stage Statement of Common Ground and Strategic Planning Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and recommends for endorsement to all South Essex LPAs and Essex County Council.  
All South Essex LPAs update their Local Development Schemes (LDS) and agree to update their Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to reflect the South Essex Local Plan Portfolio.
- Spring 2019: The Draft JSP with spatial strategy options (including preferred option) is published for Regulation 18 Consultation, in line with the SCI and agreed JSP timetable.
- November 2019: The South Essex Draft JSP is agreed by all South Essex LPAs based on recommendation by ASELA
- December 2019: Final draft version of JSP is published for Regulation 19 Consultation
- March 2020: JSP submitted for Examination
- Autumn 2020: JSP adopted by all South Essex LPAs

## 9. Local Plans

- 9.1 The JSP will provide the strategic framework for the preparation of appropriate detailed Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which will provide more detailed planning policies and perform an essential place-shaping role on the ground, particularly to deliver the Strategic Areas of Opportunity. Ideally the suite of local planning documents required to deliver the JSP would be prepared in alignment so that it could reflect the emerging spatial strategy. However, there is a need to ensure that there continues to be a planning framework whilst the JSP is being prepared, particularly to meet five to 10 year land supply requirements. The transition from relying on individual local plans to the new planning portfolio is therefore being managed in the following way:
- The commitment from all South Essex to meet the full housing needs of the sub-region (as prescribed in the proposed new nationally set methodology) is set out in the planning MoU (Annex 2)

which has been agreed by all seven partner authorities. The spatial strategy for delivering this will be agreed through the JSP process which aims to provide a framework for the first 20 years of the South Essex 2050 Ambition.

- Basildon will continue with its current local plan process given the advanced stage the plan has reached. The draft plan, which is expected to be submitted for examination in winter 2018, includes a clear commitment to review the strategy should this be necessary to support the approach set out in the JSP.
- Brentwood will continue with its current local plan process on its current timetable, but will support the JSP as it progresses.
- Castle Point currently has no up to date local plan in place and has therefore been subject to potential government intervention. The Council will therefore prepare an interim local plan covering the next ten years and focusing on planning for housing, with the ambition of meeting local housing needs in this period. In the longer term, local housing needs will be considered through the strategic assessment and allocations prepared for the JSP.
- Rochford and Southend are currently preparing new local plans to reflect the emerging strategy in the JSP. The Council's will also review the Southend Airport Joint Area Action Plan and its hinterland as an opportunity for growth for both councils
- Thurrock is currently preparing a new local plan which aims to reflect the emerging strategy in the JSP with the intention of publishing the draft (Regulation 19) plan in July 2019.

9.2 Timetables for all of the above local plan processes will be set out in the individual Local Development Schemes (LDS) but are summarised in Annex 5.

9.3 It is intended that the emerging JSP will provide the 'effective strategic planning mechanism' to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate, with the existing joint work, evidence base and shared governance through ASELA demonstrating that cooperation is proactive, positive and ongoing. At this stage, whilst there is a clear commitment to meeting the full housing needs across the sub-region, there are no housing allocations set out in the SOCG as this will be determined through the JSP and based on the agreed spatial strategy and updated evidence base. Details of the spatial strategy and how the longer term housing needs will be met will

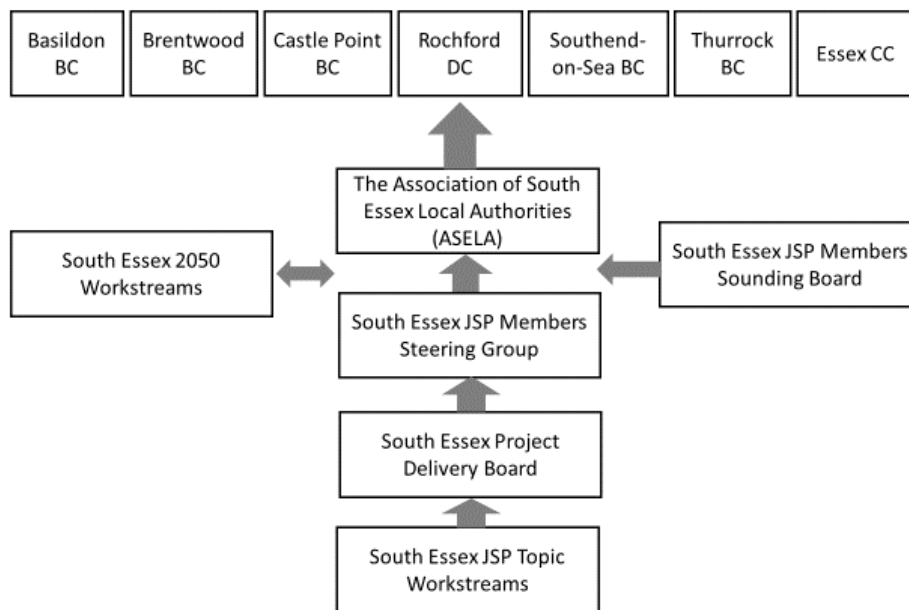
be set out in further iterations of this statement, as the JSP preparation progresses.

9.4 **Minerals and Waste Planning**

Planning for minerals and waste in South Essex is the responsibility of Thurrock and Southend Councils, and Essex County Council<sup>8</sup>. This is managed through separate local planning processes and will therefore not be part of the JSP. A separate SCG will be prepared to help manage the strategic minerals and waste planning matters.

**10. Making Decisions and working together**

Figure 5: JSP Governance Structure



10.1 ASELA has overall responsibility for implementing the South Essex 2050 Ambition and therefore the JSP as one of the main workstreams. However, statutory decision-making powers will remain with the individual LPAs who will be asked to make decisions, based on advice from ASELA, at key stages in the plan’s preparation (see key milestones in Paragraph 4.7).

<sup>8</sup> Essex and Southend Waste Local Plan (2017), Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014), Thurrock Core Strategy (2011)

- 10.2 Preparation of the JSP is steered by a Members' Group comprising a representative from each of the LPAs and Essex County Council (see Terms of Reference in Annex 4). Arrangements for how this works in relation to the wider decision-making is set out in the JSP Memorandum of Understanding in Annex 2. A key part of the risk management arrangements is ensuring that there is buy-in from the wider local authority membership throughout the preparation process, given the challenging issues this will have to address. A Member Sounding Board will therefore be established to provide cross-party representations on the JSP at key stages.
- 10.3 Wider engagement will be managed through a range of mechanisms that will be set out in the South Essex 2050 engagement strategy and the Statements of Community Involvement (see Paragraph 5.5 below).
- 10.4 Overall project management for preparation and implementation of the JSP is provided by the JSP Project Delivery Board (PDB), comprising the relevant Heads of Service from each of the partner authorities (see terms of reference in Annex 3).
- 10.5 Although there is a statutory minimum requirement for public consultation and engagement with statutory consultees, there is also a legal requirement under the Duty to Cooperate to ensure that there has been positive, effective and ongoing cooperation with neighbouring authorities in Essex, Kent and London, including the Mayor of London. The engagement and consultation processes will be set out in the JSP's Statement of Community Involvement, due to be published alongside the Statement of Common Ground.
- 10.6 Developing a long-term spatial planning framework that is deliverable will also require ongoing engagement with a number of important strategic stakeholders, including those also subject to the Duty to Cooperate. Alongside the statutory engagement process, therefore, ASELA is developing a wider engagement strategy which will involve a number of key strategic stakeholders such as:
- Government Officials and Ministers
  - South Essex MPs
  - Thames Estuary Commission
  - Economic partners (e.g. Opportunity South Essex and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership)
  - Transport partners (e.g. Highways England and Transport East (Sub-National Transport Forum) and the Mayor of London.

- Environmental partners (e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England, Greater Thames Natural Improvement Partnership, English Heritage)
- Delivery partners (e.g. Homes England, housebuilders and utilities providers)

10.6 The LPAs are hoping to establish a JSP web site under the auspices of ASELA to provide a 'one stop' access point to effectively inform and engage with all interested parties and stakeholders of the purpose of the JSP, its progress and opportunities for influencing the plans contents as part of the public consultation process.

## **11. Managing the Risks**

11.1 Delivery of the South Essex 2050 Ambition depends on a wide range of factors and bodies, not just the local authorities. The risks associated with this will be managed by ASELA on behalf of the partner authorities. There are a number of risks specifically linked to preparing the JSP on an accelerated timetable, some of which are political risks, others are technical risks. A high-level risk assessment and management plan is therefore being prepared alongside the JSP; this will be monitored by the JSP Project Delivery Board, with any potential problems highlighted to ASELA as soon as they are identified. An initial Risk Management Plan is set out in Annex 6.

## **12. Monitoring and review**

12.1 Preparation of the SOCG is an iterative process reflecting the development of both the individual local plans and the JSP. It will therefore be reviewed at key stages in the JSP's preparation as well as at key stages for the individual local plans, for example, submission to the Secretary of State for examination.

Annex 1

**Association of South Essex Local  
Authorities Memorandum of  
Understanding**

between

Basildon Borough Council

Brentwood Borough Council

Castle Point Borough  
Council

Essex County Council

Rochford District Council

Southend on Sea Borough Council

Thurrock Borough Council



## Background

- 1.1 Stemming from housing and local planning issues initially, there has been a growing recognition of the opportunity and need for greater cross-boundary working on strategic infrastructure planning and growth across South Essex. In June 2017 Leaders and Chief Executives of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock and Essex County Council (the Authorities) agreed to initiate and shape a programme of work through the summer and autumn to explore a joint 'place vision' and the scope for greater strategic collaboration along the South Essex growth corridor.
- 1.2 The work during the summer and autumn has resulted in an emerging vision and identification of strategic growth opportunities that need testing and strengthening with the people and stakeholders of South Essex and beyond. It has also built a strong commitment amongst the Authorities to collaborative working. It was agreed that an Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) should be established to continue this collaborative work.
- 1.3 The Authorities wish to record the intention to establish ASELA and basis of our collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This MoU sets out:
  - a) The core purpose and aims of ASELA
  - b) The principles of collaboration

## 2. Core Purpose and aims

- 2.1. The core purpose of ASELA is to provide place leadership for South Essex. Recognising that through our collaborative approach we will be best placed to develop and deliver a vision for South Essex up to 2050, promoting healthy growth for our communities.
- 2.2. ASELA 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 our individual areas to flourish and realise their full economic and social potential.

2.3. The aims of ASELA will be to:

- Provide place leadership;
- Open up spaces for housing, business and leisure development by developing a spatial strategy;
- Transform transport connectivity;
- Support our 7 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;
- Enhance health and social care through co-ordinated planning; and
- Work with and provide a voice for South Essex to the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission and Commissioners.

### **3. Principles of collaboration**

3.1. Our 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

3.2 The Authorities agree to adopt the following principles in working together:

- We are all in this together - and stronger if we work together
- We should build our governance incrementally- learning from the lessons from other places who are more advanced
- Through our collaboration we should be gaining something not losing something
- Local identities should not be lost
- We need to be a voice for South Essex

## APPENDIX

**4. Term and Termination**

- 4.1. This MoU shall commence on the date of the signature by each Authority and shall expire if ASELA dissolves.

**5. Variation**

- 5.1. The MoU can only be varied by written agreement of all the Authorities.

**6. Charges and liabilities**

- 6.1. Except as otherwise provided, the Parties shall bear their own costs and expenses incurred in complying with their obligations under this MoU.

**7. Status**

- 7.1. This MoU cannot override the statutory duties and powers of the parties and is not enforceable by law. However, the parties agree to the principles set out in this MoU.

**Signed by**

Local Authority	Leader/Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee	Chief Executive	Date
Basildon Borough Council			10/1/18
Brentwood Borough Council			10/1/18
Castle Point Borough Council			10/1/18
Essex County Council			10/1/18
Rochford District Council			10/1/18
Southend on Sea Borough Council			10/1/18
Thurrock Borough Council			10/1/18

## 14 STRATEGIC PLANNING IN SOUTH ESSEX

### Memorandum of Understanding

between

Basildon Borough Council

Brentwood Borough Council

Castle Point Borough Council

Essex County Council

Rochford District Council

Southend on Sea Borough Council

Thurrock Borough Council

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sets out how cooperation between the six local planning authorities in South Essex and Essex County Council will be managed in respect to strategic planning issues.

The Localism Act 2011 places a Duty to Cooperate on local planning authorities and county councils<sup>1</sup> (amongst other public sector organisations), requiring them to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of plans where this involves strategic matters. Local planning authorities will be tested in relation to legal compliance with the Duty at examination, as well as whether strategic cooperation has resulted in a 'sound' and robust approach to delivering strategic objectives.

The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017<sup>2</sup> requires local planning authorities to "identify the strategic priorities for the development and use of land in the authorities' area and set out policies to address those priorities in the development plan documents, taken as a whole. This clause was included to allow greater flexibility in the way that local planning authorities prepare local planning documents, and specifically to support the preparation of 'strategic' local plans, whether prepared individually or jointly with neighbouring authorities. However, several recent announcements from

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<sup>1</sup> Localism Act 2011, Section 110.

<sup>2</sup> Neighbourhood Planning Act Part 1, Section 8

Government on proposed planning reforms indicate strongly that the Government's preferred approach is for strategic priorities to be managed on a joint basis across housing market areas through the use of joint strategic plans.

Building on the existing strong foundations of cooperation developed through the Duty to Cooperate, and within the wider context of the South Essex 2050 Ambition, the Local Authorities have agreed to move to a more formal approach to strategic planning. This will be developed through a 'portfolio' of plans, with a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) setting out strategic spatial and infrastructure priorities that are considered to be of mutual benefit, prepared alongside a suite of 'local delivery plans' to manage delivery within each of the local planning areas.

Work on the JSP will be steered within the governance structure of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) to ensure that it aligns with other strategic priorities. Although the JSP will be prepared on the basis of collaboration through ASELA, formal decisions on the JSP at key stages in its preparation (identified in each local planning authorities' Local Development Scheme) will be taken by the individual local planning authorities which will continue to retain the statutory local planning duty (as set out in the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and the 2017 Neighbourhood Planning Act).

A Statement of Common Ground will be prepared by ASELA, setting out the process and timetable for the plan, what local delivery plans will be needed (and how current local plans will be managed through the transition process), governance and working arrangements, and the key evidence needed to support the plan. Although the focus will be strategic development (housing and economic development) and infrastructure, other strategic priorities may be included where they are required to support delivery of the South Essex 2050 Ambition. The Statement will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and updated as and when needed. This will form key evidence to support the JSP and individual 'Local Development Plans' and should therefore be made available on each of the partner authority's websites.

In preparing the JSP, all ASELA partners agree to:

- Engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in relation to strategic planning matters under the Duty to Cooperate;
- Ensure a broad and consistent approach to strategic planning and development issues in the South Essex Area;
- Support better alignment between strategic planning, infrastructure and investment priorities in South Essex;
- Adhere to the governance structure of ASELA and ensure that activities are delivered and actions are taken as required;
- Be accountable for ensuring that the role and responsibilities as agreed in the Statement of Common Ground are adhered to;
- Be open and communicate about concerns, issues and opportunities in respect of collaboration and joint working;
- Act in a timely manner, recognising the time critical nature of consultations, technical projects and plan preparation;

- Adhere to statutory requirements. Comply with applicable laws and standards, data protection and freedom of information requirements;
- Encourage, develop and share best practice in strategic planning matters;
- Ensure adequate resources and staffing are in place to undertake effective collaboration and joint working (resources to be agreed through ASELA).

## **15 Area Covered**

For the purposes of this MoU the geographic area of South Essex applies to the administrative areas of Basildon Borough, Brentwood Borough, Castle Point Borough, Rochford District, Southend on Sea Borough and Thurrock Borough Councils.

## **16 Status**

This MoU cannot override the statutory duties and powers of the parties and is not enforceable by law. However, the parties agree to the principles set out in this MoU.

This MoU is not a development plan, nor a legally binding document, but will be used in the consideration of how the South Essex Local Authorities have jointly approached strategic planning issues and legal compliance with the Duty to Cooperate.

This MoU may be supported by other documentation, and other subject specific MoUs, which set out in more detail how the parties will work together to tackle more detailed matters with respect to strategic planning in South Essex.

It is accepted that an individual party or group of parties that are signatories to this MoU may also be signatories to other MoUs between themselves, or with other parties outside South Essex in respect of the Duty to Cooperate.

### **Key outputs of this MoU are:**

- A Joint Strategic Plan setting out strategic spatial and infrastructure priorities across South Essex;
- A Delivery Strategy setting out how the strategic policy framework of the JSP will be delivered, accompanied by a risk assessment and risk management plan;
- A Statement of Common Ground setting out how a JSP will be delivered, what the evidence base is, including identification of various development needs;
- A Joint Strategic Plan Monitoring Report, prepared annually to chart and monitor delivery of the JSP.

## **17 Governance, Roles and Responsibilities**

Preparation of the Joint Strategic Plan and associated Delivery Strategy will be steered under the governance arrangements of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities. Formal decisions on the plan at key stages (to be set out in individual Local Development Schemes) will be taken by individual Local Planning Authorities on the advice and recommendations of ASELA.

18 A Members Steering Group will be accountable for the preparation of the JSP, supported by an officer Project Delivery Board. The Steering Group will comprise political representatives from each of the ASELA partners (to be appointed by individual authorities) and the Lead ASELA Member for strategic planning. The officers group will comprise the Heads of Service (or equivalent) from each of the partner authorities, and the ASELA Lead Chief Executive for strategic planning.

19 'Task and finish' groups will be used to develop specific topics to support the JSP, to be identified by the Steering Group, as and when needed.

Terms of Reference for all groups will be established, setting out the roles, responsibilities and administration. These will be agreed by ASELA and reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant.

Local authorities should ensure that adequate resources are provided in order to undertake the joint work programme as set out in the Statement of Common Ground. Additional resources may be provided by other relevant bodies, as agreed to undertake specified tasks under the work programme.

### **Risk Management**

The South Essex Authorities are committed to meeting the full nationally set local housing need across the sub-region. This will be managed on a strategic basis with the distribution across the LPAs reflecting the shared spatial strategy and priorities. Although preparation of the JSP will be steered through ASELA, decision-making will remain the responsibility of the individual local authorities. It is recognised that there is risks associated with this therefore a full risk assessment has been prepared and set out in the Statement of Common Ground and will be monitored on a regular basis, with any concerns raised through the JSP governance structures.

### **Review of the MoU**

This MoU is effective from the date it is signed by the Chief Executive and Leaders of all parties. It will be reviewed as and when indicated through the Statement of Common Ground

## ANNEX 3

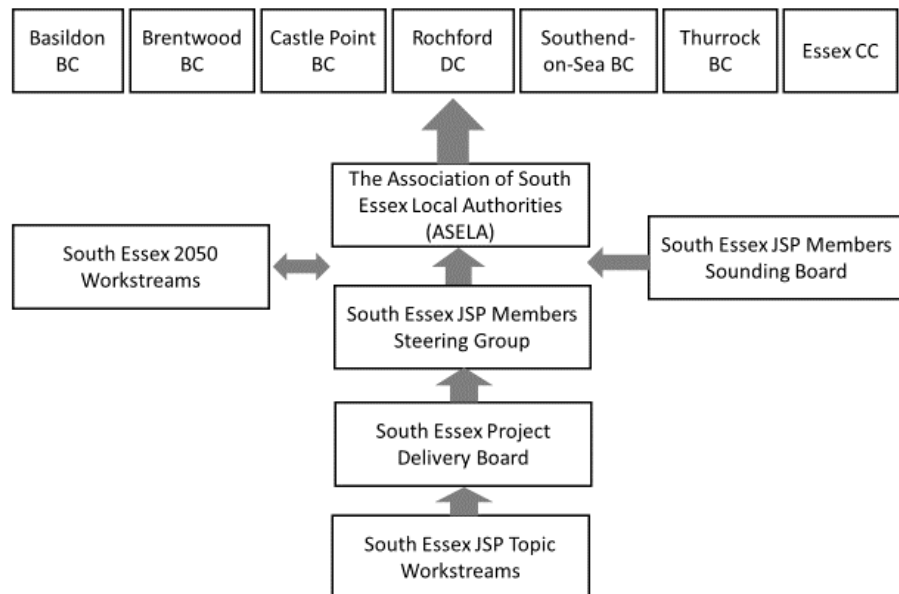
### SOUTH ESSEX JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

#### PROJECT DELIVERY BOARD – TERMS OF REFERENCE

March 2018

1. The South Essex Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, together with Essex County Council, are preparing a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) to support the South Essex 2050 Ambition. The JSP, together with other local development plans, will deliver the spatial strategy and will be delivered alongside a South Essex Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Infrastructure Framework. The JSP will be steered by a Member Steering Group, reporting to the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA). Statutory decision-making powers will, however, remain with the individual LPAs who will be asked to make decisions, based on advice from ASELA, at key stages in the plan's preparation.
2. Overall project management for preparation and implementation of the JSP is provided by the Project Delivery Board (PDB), comprising the relevant Heads of Service from each of the partner authorities.

#### JSP Governance Structure





3. The main functions of the PDB are to:
  - i. act as the interface between the political decision-making and the technical processes, providing advice on the JSP to the Members Steering Group and ASELA, working closely with the ASELA lead Member and Chief Executive;
  - ii. ensure that the JSP is aligned with other South Essex 2050 workstreams, particularly in relation to the emerging Local Industrial Strategy, strategic infrastructure priorities and housing and growth proposition;
  - iii. ensure that the JSP is delivered to the agreed timetable, is technically sound (supported by a robust evidence-base) and is legally compliant;
  - iv. manage engagement with external partners, neighbouring authorities and Statutory Consultees on behalf of the Members Steering Group, ensuring that collaboration is positive and proactive, as required by the Duty to Cooperate.
  - v. provide overall project management for the individual JSP topic workstreams, supporting and the role of the JSP Project Manager.
  - vi. manage the JSP budget on behalf of the Members Steering Group, ensuring that it is used effectively and efficiently to support the plan's preparation and its supporting evidence base.
  - vii. Manage the risks of preparing and implementing the JSP, highlighting any potential problems to ASELA as soon as practically possible.
4. The PDB meets every two weeks in between ASELA meetings. Dates will be set at least six months in advance and aligned to the JSP timetable and work programme.
5. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed on an annual basis (every March).

## ANNEX 4

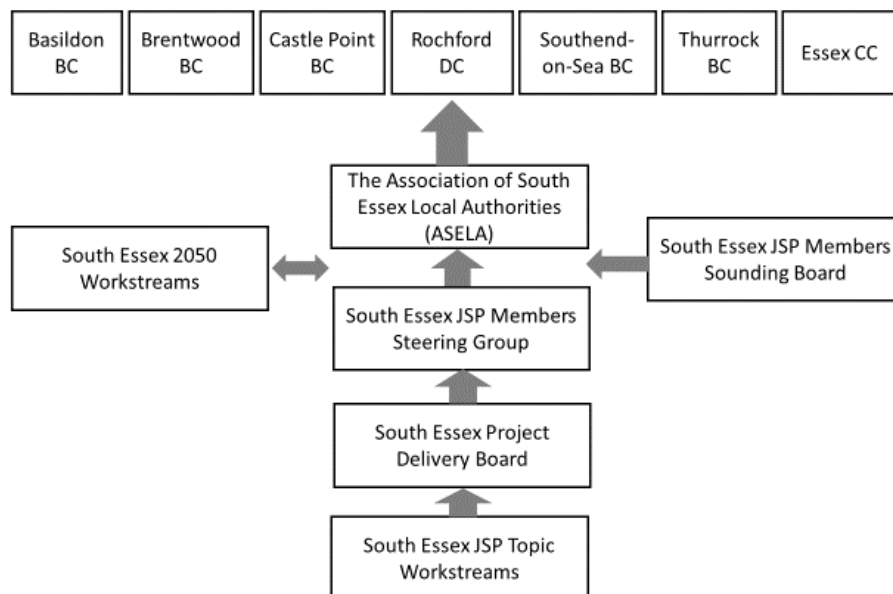
### SOUTH ESSEX JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

#### MEMBERS STEERING GROUP – TERMS OF REFERENCE

March 2018

1. The South Essex Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, together with Essex County Council, are preparing a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) to support the South Essex 2050 Ambition (SE2050). The JSP, together with other local Development Plan Documents (DPDs), will deliver the spatial priorities and will be delivered alongside a South Essex Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Infrastructure Framework.
2. The Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) will be accountable for the JSP alongside the other SE2050 workstreams. Statutory decision-making powers will, however, remain with the individual LPAs who will be asked to make decisions, based on advice from ASELA, at key stages in the plan's preparation.
3. The Members Steering Group will be responsible for the preparation of the JSP on behalf of ASELA, supported by an officer Project Delivery Board (PDB), comprising the relevant Heads of Service from each of the partner authorities.

#### JSP Governance Structure



## **Purpose of the JSP Member Steering Group**

- To ensure a coherent and collaborative approach is undertaken for sub-regional planning matters across South Essex through the preparation of a statutory Joint Strategic Plan.
- To ensure that the Joint Strategic Plan is aligned to the long term priorities shared by all authorities and set out in the South Essex 2050 Ambition.
- To advise ASELA on the Joint Strategic Plan, ensuring that there is consensus amongst the partner authorities at each of the key stages in its preparation.
- To steer work on the Joint Strategic Plan through the Project Delivery Board, ensuring that the plan's spatial strategy is robust and deliverable.
- To be accountable for the overall work programme and budget for the Joint Strategic Plan, ensuring that any significant issues are highlighted to ASELA as soon as practically possible.
- To engage with the Mayor of London and adjoining local authorities and their partnerships on strategic planning matters ensuring that the legal requirements of the Duty to Cooperate are met.

## **Membership**

The group will consist of a Member from each one of the ASELA partner authorities. The individual local authority member representation to the group shall be determined by that local authority.

Each authority should nominate substitutes should the main representative not be able to attend a meeting. The Local Authority partners are:

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

The chair of the Member Steering Group will be the ASELA lead member for the South Essex 2050 spatial strategy workstream.

The Members Steering Group will meet monthly with dates coordinated with the ASELA and Project Delivery Board meetings. Dates will be set at least six months in advance and aligned to the JSP timetable and work programme.

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed on an annual basis (every March).

## **ANNEX 5 – Current Local Plan Timetable (as at June 2018)**

### **BASILDON**

Q2 2018 - Regulation 19 Publication

Q3 2018 - Submission

Q2 2019 - Adoption

### **BRENTWOOD**

Q3 2018 – Regulation 19 Publication

Q4 2018 – Submission

Q2 2019 - Adoption

**CASTLE POINT** (subject to change depending on outcome of Government Intervention)

July 2018 – Regulation 18 Consultation

January 2019 – Regulation 19 Publication

April 2019 – Submission

Autumn 2019 - Adoption

### **ROCHFORD**

Winter 2019/Spring 2020 – Regulation 19 Publication

Summer 2020 – Submission

Spring/Summer 2021 - Adoption

### **SOUTHEND**

Autumn/Winter 2020 – Regulation 19 Publication

Spring 2021 – Submission

No date for proposed adoption but LDS 2018 states that “As an approximation, the period from submission to adoption may range from 6 to 9 months dependent on the content and scope of the plan, issues arising during examination and scheduling of meetings.”

### **THURROCK**

July 2018 – Regulation 18 Consultation

July 2019 – Regulation 19 Publication

Late 2020/early 2021 – Adoption

## Annex 6: Joint Strategic Plan Risk Assessment

Risk Identified	Risk Management
<p>1. Unable to meet JSP timetable (e.g. due to protracted decision-making process, technical delays due to procurement of evidence, staff resources, Planning Inspectorate unable to meet timetable)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Delivery Board to monitor progress against ‘key milestones’ and work programme, highlighting any risks at an early stage to ASELA and agree how this is to be managed – actions will depend on issue e.g. resources</li> <li>• ASELA to agree a standardised approach to decision-making, with each partner authority working with their committee services to provide a streamlined approach at key stages and ensure that this does not add unnecessary time to the process. Delegated authority to ASELA for some stages to be explored</li> <li>• Procurement processes to be agreed by ASELA to ensure JSP work is treated as a priority and procurement facilitates timely commissioning and appointment of consultancy support. This should allow for a bespoke tendering and procurement approach and commitment to fund agreed technical programme to expedite procurement process. This should also address particular constraints that may arise as a result of OJEU considerations and thresholds.</li> <li>• Development of evidence base will be focused on strategic priorities with any potential ‘mission creep’ flagged by project manager as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Evidence base and external support considered at ‘pre-commencement’ stage with project management/intelligent client function, budget and timescales secured.</li> <li>• A full audit of existing resources and capacity to be undertaken by ASELA at</li> </ul>

	<p>the JSP commencement stage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where lack of capacity and/ or conflicts of interest within the private sector arise, alternative options should be considered at an early stage in the plan preparation process e.g. internal training and development to fill any potential gaps, or different consultants procured to deliver components of larger projects where a single provider cannot be secured.</li> <li>• Early discussion with Planning Inspectorate to ensure timetable for Examination can be met – Government to promote SE JSP as a priority if necessary.</li> </ul>
2. Government intervention destabilises JSP process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early engagement with Government Ministers and senior Civil Servants to explore options around intervention mechanisms, highlighting risks to JSP progress.</li> <li>• Agree key milestones with MHCLG with regular updates from ASELA.</li> <li>• ASELA to support LPAs ‘at risk’ to meet published plan timetables</li> <li>• All South Essex Local Development Schemes (LDS) to be updated to reflect the new joint planning arrangements by July 2018 and kept up to date as plans are progressed.</li> </ul>
3. One or more partner local plans are found unsound with regards to the strategic matters and/ or fail to comply with the Duty to Cooperate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any issues that risk the overall approach to the shared 2050 ambition or imply that there is not agreement on the JSP spatial strategy or key strategic matters will be highlighted to ASELA as soon as it becomes apparent to allow for the matters to be resolved at a South Essex level</li> </ul>
4. Thames Estuary Commission undermines SE2050 Ambition and spatial strategy of JSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early and ongoing engagement between ASELA and Thames Estuary Commission to ensure alignment of growth ambitions on delivery strategy</li> <li>• Early and ongoing engagement with relevant Government Ministers and senior Civil Servants to ensure they fully understand SE2050 Ambition and role of LAs in delivering this and secure a Housing Deal.</li> </ul>

<p>5. Key place shaping infrastructure is not delivered in order to facilitate strategic growth options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASELA provides support in the engagement with strategic infrastructure providers and Government as part of the SE2050 implementation process and development of the JSP to ensure that their priorities reflect the strategic infrastructure priorities of the South Essex Authorities and facilitate delivery of the</li> <li>• ASELA to support Thurrock and ECC in its negotiations with Highways England, the National Infrastructure Commission and Government specifically in relation to the Lower Thames Crossing to ensure that the final agreed route facilitates delivery of the SE2050 Ambition and the spatial strategy of the JSP.</li> </ul>
<p>6. Change in Government which changes to national policy/legislation and/or change in national funding priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust SE2050 Ambition developed with risk management built in to delivery plan(s) to ensure contingency funding and approach to deliver same outcome.</li> <li>• Robust evidence-base to justify overall approach even if not in conformity with new national policy</li> <li>• Procure legal advisers to assess and highlight potential risks at early stage and ensure contingency approach with secures same overall outcome.</li> <li>• work with MHCLG, PAS and PINs to ensure ongoing conformity with national policy and legislation.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Partners unable to agree JSP at key stages (e.g. due to change in political leadership, lack of political consensus on key policy direction, competing priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASELA ensure new leadership fully informed of JSP process and SE2050 Ambition</li> <li>• ASELA/Planning MoU to ensure agreement to JSP</li> <li>• Members Sounding Board established to ensure cross-party involvement and ownership in JSP</li> <li>• Communications strategy prepared to ensure ongoing briefings and opportunities to engage in JSP preparation are provided for all Members of partner authorities</li> <li>• Continuity in JSP member Steering Group throughout preparation process ASELA/Planning MoU to ensure agreement to JSP</li> </ul>



<p>8. Resources and skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASELA to set a realistic budget for JSP preparation, taking into account all potential internal and external sources of funding (including Planning Delivery Fund, potential funding from growth deal to support capacity)</li> <li>• Secure project management support during pre-commencement stage</li> <li>• Focus on key policy areas and evidence needed to support this (i.e. keep to agreed scope)</li> <li>• Agree training and development programme to fill gaps and upskill existing officers to reduce need to procure externally</li> <li>• Work on 'South Essex' basis, ensuring making the more effective and efficient use of all resources and skills across all seven partner authorities</li> </ul>
<p>9. External stakeholders undermine SE2050 Ambition/ JSP Spatial strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a stakeholder sounding board to ensure ongoing commitment / support from strategic stakeholders</li> <li>• Prepare a robust framework to ensure compliance with the Duty to Cooperate and engagement with Statutory Consultees</li> <li>• Prepare a Statement of Community Involvement at the start of the formal JSP preparation process (June 2018) and agree with stakeholder sounding board.</li> <li>• Agree an approach with Government to support emerging SE2050 ambitions whilst JSP is prepared and reduce the risks of stakeholders undermining delivery e.g. deviation for national policy on 5YLS requirements / Housing Delivery Test to reduce risks of speculative planning applications, alignment of approach by government bodies (e.g. Homes England, Highways England, Environment Agency).</li> </ul>
<p>10. Evidence base highlights significant challenges in delivering the JSP Spatial Strategy and SE2050 Ambitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potential challenges in JSP Delivery Plan (e.g. infrastructure funding) and agree risk management plan for addressing</li> <li>• Consider contingency approach which will still deliver same outcome.</li> </ul>

11. Public consultation attracts opposition and seeks to undermine SE2050 Ambition/ JSP Spatial strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communications strategy prepared to ensure ongoing briefings and opportunities to engage in JSP preparation are explained for all partner authorities</li><li>• Case for change articulated by highlighting benefits of growth and investment in infrastructure</li></ul>