

REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 21 JULY 2010**PORTFOLIO: OVERALL STRATEGY AND POLICY DIRECTION****REPORT FROM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE****SUBJECT: LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS – A
CONSULTATION ON THE WAY FORWARD****1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That this Council supports the proposal, for submission to Central Government, to form a South Essex Local Enterprise Partnership covering the entire authority areas of Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock.

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Coalition Government is proposing the creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships to replace Regional Development Agencies. These partnerships will be “joint local authority – business bodies brought forward by local authorities themselves to promote the local economic development” in an area. The Government anticipate that such partnerships will wish to provide the strategic leadership in their areas to set out local economic priorities, recognising that a clear vision is vital if local economic renewal is to be achieved.
- 2.2 Consequently, the Government have now written to all Local Authorities inviting local groups of councils and business leaders to come together and submit views as to how Local Enterprise Partnerships should be formed, as such partnerships will help with the transition away from Regional Development Agencies.
- 2.3 In the context of Rochford, two options for a Local Enterprise Partnership would appear possible. One would be based on the County of Essex, minus the unitaries of Southend and Thurrock; the other would be formed from the building blocks around the existing Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership. In economic development and infrastructure terms, there is clearly more synergy between the South Essex authorities than across the County as a whole, particularly if the two unitaries did not participate in the county-wide option; thus a submission around the South Essex Authorities areas is the one put forward for support.
- 2.4 Government have asked for outline proposals as soon as possible and no later than 6 September, so this Council's commitment to a South Essex solution, along with similar commitment by the other South Essex Authorities, would enable outline proposals to be worked up and submitted within the timeframe set.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The Council could determine not to make any commitment in terms of this initiative. However, to do so is likely to result in the Council becoming isolated and unable to contribute to any economic development activity or access any funding streams that will be available to promote such activity. It will also mean that the Council forgoes an opportunity to contribute to the emerging government agenda and the economic renewal and wealth creation of the area.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are reputational risks to the Council both in participating and/or not participating in this agenda. There are also political risks in terms of working with other Councils and in being seen to be positively engaging with and contributing to the new Coalition Government's emerging economic development agenda. There would be resource risks too, in non participating in this agenda, as whatever funding is available, albeit limited, is likely to be directed at Local Enterprise Partnerships that can demonstrate an ability to work together and deliver.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Chief Executive

Background Papers:

None

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