

Public Document Pack

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Legal & Democratic Services

Strategic Director: John Williams

📍 Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 6ER

☎ 01702 215000

🌐 www.southend.gov.uk

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10 June 2021

CABINET - TUESDAY, 15TH JUNE, 2021 SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS AND MINUTES PACK

Please find enclosed, for consideration at the next meeting of the Cabinet taking place on Tuesday, 15th June, 2021, the following report(s) and Working Party minutes that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda Item No

7. Culture-led Regeneration and the Town Centre (Pages 1 - 32)

Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (Growth and Housing) attached

8. Levelling Up Fund Applications (Pages 33 - 46)

Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (Growth and Housing) attached

12. ASELA Governance (Pages 47 - 72)

Report of Chief Executive attached

17. Minutes of the ASELA and Local Government Reform Working Party held 7th June 2021 (Pages 73 - 74)

Minutes attached

18. Minutes of the Public Protection Working Party held 8th June 2021 (Pages 75 - 76)

Minutes attached

19. Minutes of the Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning Working Party held 8th June 2021 (Pages 77 - 78)

Minutes attached

Robert Harris
Principal Democratic Services Officer

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director
Growth & Housing and the Executive Director Adults &
Communities

To

Cabinet

On

15th June 2021

Report prepared by: Emma Cooney, Director of Regeneration
& Growth and Scott Dolling, Director of Culture & Tourism

Agenda
Item No.

7

Culture-led Regeneration and the Town Centre

Relevant Scrutiny Committee(s) Place
Cabinet Members: Cllr Gilbert & Cllr Mulronev
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report sets out the planned next steps towards a reimagined and thriving town centre and the transformational role of culture led regeneration in delivering this and other outcomes across the borough. Progress to date is also included by way of context and foundation for next steps.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the principles of the Culture Vision (Appendix 1) are adopted to shape and inform culture-led regeneration;
- 2.2 That progress of outcomes contributing towards a reimagined and thriving town centre are noted;
- 2.3 That the design plans for the LGF funded public realm external works at the Forum (Elmer Square) are agreed; and
- 2.4 That development of a visual 'masterplan lite' for the town centre is progressed with a culture-led regeneration focus and that £125,000 is set aside to support this work and is funded from the Covid Recovery Reserve.

3. Background

- 3.1 The future of town centres is a well debated subject nationally and has consistently been a priority in Southend in recent years. Supporting the continuing evolution of Southend town centre was highlighted through the 2050 conversations and is reflected in an outcome in the Opportunity and Prosperity theme. This led to the town centre being the focus of a joint scrutiny project in

2018-19 and a Town Centre summit in September 2018. As part of the central area it is also covered by the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP) which gives detailed consideration to how and where regeneration and growth can sustainably be accommodated.

- 3.2** The town centre is a microcosm of the borough with nearly all activities and elements of life that you find across Southend also found and required in the central area – places to live, work, play, learn and visit, alongside health provision, cultural assets and green spaces – in line with the principles of the walkable neighbourhood. Additionally, it is the borough’s primary retail area, and since it enjoys direct connection with the central seafront and is home to stations on both train lines is also one of the busiest areas during the visitor season. As such investment and intervention to improve and enhance the town centre can deliver new homes, skills, employment, increased year-round local spend, a sense of wellbeing, connection and local pride, and be a catalyst for attracting further investment. Some of these outcomes will be sought to be achieved through the proposed Levelling-Up Fund (LUF) bid set out in the accompanying LUF report (report number 21/010) and all of which will be principles for the masterplan lite proposed in this report.
- 3.3** When the Covid-19 pandemic hit in early 2020 the town centre was swiftly recognised by the Council as a priority area and featured as one of the Council’s 6 recovery priorities.
- 3.4** The pandemic has had a significant impact on the town centre with periods of closure and restriction. It has accelerated some existing trends, such as online retail which some experts suggest has leapt forward by ten years; introduced some new trends which are temporary and others which may become more permanent as people and businesses settle into a blend of time in the office and at home.
- 3.5** For a seaside destination like Southend, the role of a broader cultural offer supports a year round visitor economy and can boost footfall. The resulting opportunity for growth has even greater resonance with some of our most deprived wards in the same central area,
- 3.6** Southend’s Culture Vision (Appendix 1) is a key strategy that has also developed over the last year having consulted and collaborated extensively with our creative sector and residents. The vision has five overarching themes which are supported by a set of underpinning values. These themes and values have been co-developed and support the council’s wider social and economic outcomes outlined in the Southend 2050 ambition
- 3.7** In September 2020 the Council, with South Essex College, took the difficult decision to not progress with the Forum 2 build project in the town centre as a result of the pandemic on finances. However, the Council committed to developing an options appraisal to inform Southend’s approach to culture-led regeneration and deliver against the identified outcomes recognising the role and impact of culture and the creative sector. This work was led by Focal Point Gallery, the region’s only contemporary arts gallery and national portfolio organisation (NPO) for the Arts Council. The findings of this work are set out later

in the report. An extensive ASELA commissioned study into the regional opportunities for cultural regeneration undertaken by METAL, also an Arts Council NPO based in Southend, has further supported evidence into the options appraisal.

3.8 Southend's creative industries have capacity to grow and further support the economy. The sector does need investment in infrastructure to realise its potential however which has been evidenced in recent studies. Engagement with arts and culture is proven to benefit the lives of residents and encourage visitors to Southend. It is a powerful route to support community cohesion, wellbeing and mental health, and pride in a community.

3.9 The economic impact of culture is also well documented with recent reports highlighting headlines such as:

- For every £1 in turnover directly generated by the arts and culture industry, an additional £1.24 in output is supported in the wider economy.
- For every 1 job directly created by the arts and culture industry, an additional 1.65 jobs are supported in the wider economy.
- Across the UK the sector is set to grow to £15.2 billion by 2025;¹
- Creative industries are the fastest growing sector in the UK economy and have a clear role in economic recovery.
- Jobs in the creative sector are less likely to be automated than many other areas.
- Creative industries drive and unlock innovation, deliver significant social impact, and invest heavily in the regeneration of communities ²

3.10 Cultural and creative programmes also bring benefits and opportunities for residents and new visitors alike. DCMS investment of £4.3m from the Culture Development Fund has ensured that culture-led regeneration is underway across the Estuary with the Creative Estuary programme. The Creative Estuary programme aims to develop the Estuary as an internationally important hub for the Creative & Cultural Industries, with Southend as an important 'Creative Cluster' within the region, providing investment, jobs and training, creative programming, place making activities and branding, infrastructure improvements. As part of this, the Estuary 21 Festival has served to celebrate specific locations and histories that are often overlooked around the South Essex and North Kent coastline, which can lead to longer-term regeneration opportunities. This project leveraging in significant external investment is jointly presented by METAL, based in Southend and features many other Southend arts organisations including Focal Point Gallery. One of the sites for Estuary 21, Gunners Park in Shoeburyness, highlighting the unique heritage of this part of the Borough bringing new

¹ Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) published September 2020 - reference for bullet points 1-3

² Research undertaken by the Creative Industries Federation - reference for bullet points 4-6

audiences to the area. There are developed plans to restore the former battery gun store as a Heritage Centre to become a permanent venue.

- 3.11** There is therefore a strong case for employing a culture-led regeneration approach to the town centre. The creative industries are a proven tool for stimulating local economic development and regeneration. This sector is people focused and applies to social and physical infrastructure. It has the potential to support a new mixed ecology for the town centre, sustaining retail alongside the delivery of new workspaces, homes and cultural leisure activities as well as developing a sense of pride and community cohesion, improving environmental, health and deprivation outcomes.
- 3.12** Southend already enjoys a rich and diverse creative sector with organisations and businesses of all sizes and disciplines, and so there is a strong foundation to cultivate and grow this important sector for the local economy. Within the town centre area there is significant opportunity to use culture in its broader regeneration context to support economic growth and underpin the community as it develops. Milton, Victoria and Kursaal wards are among our most deprived and will all benefit from the regeneration opportunities. The town centre footprint for the masterplan lite outlined in section 5, will be determined through that work drawing on consultation feedback.

4. Outcome delivery to date

- 4.1** Despite the restrictions and challenges the pandemic has brought, good progress has been made in progressing outcome delivery and preparing for the next phase, both by the Council and partners. This section of the report provides an update on work undertaken and the outcomes achieved and enabled.

Delivering Economic Growth

- 4.2** There is a wide variety of interventions enabling business adaptation and growth, employment opportunities, and supporting the evolution of the town centre. These include Better Queensway and Seaway Leisure as two major projects in the town centre which collectively represent over £600m investment in the borough including some £20m of Government funding. Their construction and activation are forecast to create c1,500 jobs, upto 1760 homes, c25,000sqm commercial, leisure and creative floorspace, and improved public realm and space to dwell north and south of the High Street. Both projects are set to significantly increase footfall in the town centre as more people make it their home and leisure destination.
- 4.3** The vibrancy of the town centre is being supported utilising funding from South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). Vacant town centre premises, both at street level and above, can benefit from 0% loans³ to be brought back into use and the Council is also looking to activate an empty unit with culture led activities as a pilot working to find a sustainable business model. Grant funding has also been invested in data analytics to better understand how the town centre is being

³ <https://www.southend.gov.uk/business-1/town-centre-interventions-project/3?documentId=1055&categoryId=100002>

used and will provide a more robust and detailed data set than the proxies currently in place. This supports the Council's commitment to making data driven policy decisions and therefore signals better outcomes for such major investments made by the Council as well as data which can help to support wider investment decisions.

Victoria Shopping Centre

4.4 In December 2020 the Council took the decision to purchase the Victoria Shopping Centre recognising its future regeneration benefits and the strategic landholding it offered in helping to shape the future of the town centre. Feedback from the commercial market has indicated an increased confidence in Southend as a result with this, and other projects such as Better Queensway, Roots Hall and Fossetts Farm and Seaway Leisure being referenced as reasons to invest. In the short term the Council has set out to drive up footfall and occupancy in the Victoria Centre. The hospital blood testing service has taken a unit on the ground floor with 5 other new lets agreed. The Council is advancing discussions with potential occupiers which are at various stages. This presents new employment opportunities as well as business growth. The Council is actively looking at:

- required short-term capital investment needed;
- working with retailers (and all commercial tenants across the portfolio) as restrictions are released to ensure that opportunities to trade safely are optimised and financial commitments can be addressed.
- the physical relationship between the Victoria Centre and the first phase of Better Queensway including the bridge over Chichester Road;
- Options to improve the centre car park, to consider electric vehicle infrastructure and improve energy efficiency/reduce carbon impact;
- potential investments in the elevations and immediate public realm;
- to what extent a significant Council and wider public-sector occupancy within the centre could help to reposition the Victoria Centre, to help drive footfall both within the centre and into the wider town centre area and to what extent this could unlock further opportunities in other locations to support the Council in meeting a wide range of Southend 2050 outcome

4.5 The acquisition of the Centre provides the opportunity for the Council to review town centre parking provision and its previous commitment in relation to developing a multi-storey carpark at Tylers Avenue. It is intended that this review will be included as part of the masterplan lite set out in this paper.

Making more of Culture

4.6 Southend's Culture Vision (appended) underlines our 2050 ambitions as well as providing a framework for key strategic plans outlined in this report. Several key themes have emerged from the wide engagement that inform the aspirations for culture led regeneration.

4.7 Recognising the pride it brings to Southend and the significant social, economic, and wellbeing benefits it offers, cultural themes have played a significant role in the place branding project which was recently completed. The purpose of a new

place brand is to reflect a more confident, contemporary and creative place, and to 'position' the entire place as one 'city' with many diverse and distinct offers – and to 'sell' it to not just potential visitors, but to those who live, study and work here both now and in the future. It has also established a set of core values and behaviours that have been developed to inspire and influence strategy, policy, marketing and decision making.

4.8 The Cultural Vision engagement also highlights the importance of heritage and supports recent investment decisions around Southend Pier and underpins the need for ongoing investment in our key cultural spaces in the town centre such as the Beecroft and Central Museum.

4.9 A significant piece of work assessing the need and opportunity for the creative sector and culture-led regeneration has been undertaken in the 6 months leading up to April 2021. This options appraisal paves the way for the next phases of investment, partnership and to shape culture-led regeneration. It has been informed by extensive consultations, surveys and desk-top research. It has re-established the requirements of local residents and the creative industries in South Essex in support of the 2050 outcomes to maximise the potential of cultural and creative facilities in Southend and its leading role in the wider South Essex region.

4.10 Specific outcomes identified through the options appraisal are to develop the central section of Southend High Street as a cohesive arts and education 'quarter'. Building on the success of the Forum partnership model with academic and public uses it could capitalise on the potential of the creative industries as integral to a future mixed-use economy, with enhanced community benefits within the Town Centre. This would increase opportunities for residents, visitors and businesses to grow the local economy and improve the quality of life. Currently this middle area has a significant number of empty or underused properties and is neglected in appearance. The benefits in regenerating the central High Street area as a cohesive arts and education 'quarter' include:

- Create a new identity and economic focus for the central area of Southend High Street, which is being vacated by retailers and therefore in decline.
- Crime reduction through bringing underused buildings and public realm into alternative use.
- Community facilities with dedicated use for residents of the Southend Central Wards (the most deprived wards in Southend). Would support public health outcomes particularly around Mental Health.
- Provide the infrastructure for new skills development programmes and well-being activities through arts and culture targeted at deprived residents.
- Create economic growth and local market for the creative industries in Southend (who currently have to export their business or procure services from outside the Borough). The creative industries are an important sector in Southend and South Essex, currently without sufficient production spaces and public venues.

- These would encourage more footfall with visitors, and residents attracted to use the town centre, thereby encouraging additional spend in existing retail and hospitality.
- Create new pathways into employment through specific facilities and a 'safe space' for young people (age 14 – 25) to engage with the skills development outside of formal education (see LGA Review).
- The development of Focal Point Gallery (FPG) as the only dedicated public contemporary arts venue in South Essex and Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation to enhance and grow its offer. Investment in equivalent facilities elsewhere have proven social and economic benefits.
- Specific facilities and a 'safe space' for young people (age 14 – 25) to engage with the skills development outside of formal education and create new pathways into employment.
- Kick start and enable the growth of the Night Time economy.

4.11 The findings suggest that some of these benefits could be achieved by 1) remodelling of underused areas of the current Forum building and external square will increase the use of these assets, particularly for skills development and cultural activities and 2) identifying underused properties for creative sector uses. These findings and the consultation informing them will be used to develop the masterplan lite described in section 5.

Green City

4.12 The Council has declared a climate change emergency and adopted its Green City Action Plan which sets out the actions which will be delivered to become a Green City. Active steps are being taken across the borough, including the town centre, to effect change and progress towards the commitments made. In the town centre specific greening and energy projects are being implemented alongside changes to enable people using the town centre to walk and cycle, all of which have been supported by external grant and/or commercial funding enabling more to be delivered.

4.13 The Green City Action Plan includes a focus on the actions the Council can take to improve the energy performance of its own estate. Grant funding is being used to explore the ability to generate and supply low carbon energy, providing cheaper energy and reducing the pressure on the existing power grid. An assessment is currently taking place on Victoria Shopping Centre following the Council's purchase of the site, in order to identify a sustainable low carbon solution that drives performance and cost improvements.

4.14 Another Green City Action Plan focus is on building climate resilience across Southend which includes prioritisation of greening and enhancing green and open spaces in Southend. Further grant funding is supporting delivery of more plants, trees and greenery into the town centre to reduce heat stress and offer a safer and more welcoming space for residents and visitors. Additional greening is

being delivered through the Better Queensway project with 190 news trees, and 7,000 sqm of new park and green space. Better Queensway is also enabling the shift to sustainable travel with 1,400m of new cyclepaths and EV charging supporting modern, sustainable town centre living.

Improving the look and feel and feeling safe

4.15 Local feedback and national research continues to highlight the importance of good quality, well maintained, safe and attractive public spaces in encouraging people to make good use of them. Over the last year public spaces have also become more important for those who don't have a private garden or courtyard and in supporting people's mental and physical wellbeing.

4.16 £750,000 grant funding from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) is being used to develop and implement the first phases of a design to enhance the public realm between the Elmer Square, Southend Central Station and the High Street. The design, found at appendix 2 is recommended for approval through this report. The vision is to create a welcoming and attractive place in the heart of Southend which enhances connectivity between venues and places of interest; and is part of the findings of the options appraisal (as set out in paragraph 4.9). It has been developed using the same co-design principles as the area where London Road meets the High Street with engagement from a wide range of stakeholders including Forum Management Limited Board, Focal Point Gallery Advisory Group, BID, South University of Essex, C2C Rail and South Essex College. The big screen remains a key focus for the space and therefore we have used the concept of cinema thinking back to the previous use of the surrounding area in the 1920s to feature:

- Raised seating lawns reflecting the traditional layout of seating blocks and isles in a theatre
- A sense of green space, trees and quality materials
- A natural seaside themed play area with specialist tactile stimulation
- Food and beverage with plenty of seating opportunity
- Stage area for arts, culture and performances
- Open space for events, markets and exhibitions
- Community garden, sculptures and art to promote skills and learning
- Lighting to connect corridors, raise interest and reduce crime
- A common material palette to promote diversity of use
- Wayfinding that creates interest and promotes connectivity
- Removal of barriers and clutter to promote an open, welcome environment.

4.17 Further funding will be required to implement this vision in full and these works may form part of a future town centre Levelling-Up Fund (LUF) bid which is referred to in an accompanying report.

4.18 Improved public realm has also been delivered in a number of streets adjoining the High Street including where London Road meets the High Street. The new design, to be completed August 2021, will encourage and enable pedestrians to move more freely throughout the space which will be enhanced

with planters, benches, modern paving and improved wayfinding. New cycle parking will also support the shift to sustainable travel while new street lighting and CCTV will improve safety and security, as well as a replacement automated bollards system and other security measures that will enable close control over vehicular access to the High Street, making for a safer and more pleasant visitor experience. The designs also incorporate sustainable urban drainage to assist with water management.

- 4.19** In addition to the investment in public realm, grant funding is currently available⁴ to match fund business investment in external shop renovations in terms of design, cleanliness and safety. This seeks to help businesses make their premises more attractive to draw greater footfall while also helping to improve the general appearance of the town centre.

Active & involved / participation

- 4.20** Given the complexity of, and interest in the town centre it is not surprising that driving change in the town centre is often brought about through partnership with stakeholders, funders, partners and residents.

- 4.21** The Council has been successful in securing funding from a range of sources in relation to the town centre indicative of the robust articulation of need and delivery and strong partnership arrangements with funders. This totals over £30m from a range of partners including Homes England, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and Department for Transport. This is in addition to the commercial investment secured through partnerships with the likes of Swan Housing Association and Turnstone Estates.

- 4.22** The Safer Southend Stakeholder Group, comprising local business representatives, council representatives and other organisations including Police, was established in response to the pandemic to plan for and support safe reopenings in the town centre, seafront and across the borough. This group has shaped the spend of the of Reopening High Streets Safely Fund, including the 'Imagining a New Future' works which will be presented by Focal Point Gallery as banners along Southend High Street, seen from Victoria Circus to Pier Hill 2021. The group is now looking at the Welcome Back Fund, which includes additional funds specifically for coastal resorts and will enable a positive response to the various economic impacts of the pandemic in Southend. The £228k fund for 2020/2021 will help to prepare for a greater number of visitors over the coming months by improving the look and feel of the High Street and main shopping areas across the borough, supporting events, and other initiatives to help to boost footfall and encourage people back into the High Streets. A plan of activities and interventions that the funding would be spent on has now been submitted to Government for approval. This includes activation at the top of the High Street, events support, and communication and publicity.

⁴ <https://www.southend.gov.uk/business-1/town-centre-interventions-project#:~:text=The%20Shop%20Front%20Renovation%20Scheme,%2C%20shop%20branding%2C%20and%20lighting.>

- 4.23** Work with existing partnerships, such as the Southend Business Improvement District (BID) and the Engineroom, has continued with their involvement in different areas of focus. The Engineroom, which was established following the in-depth scrutiny project, has continued to engage with some potential developers in the background while energy has been focused on support and reopening. The Southend BID is currently in its second 5 year term and has played a key role in responding to the impacts of the pandemic on businesses in the town centre, as well as regular ongoing work enabling public realm improvements to be identified and quickly put in place. The BID, together with other stakeholders, participated in the in-depth Scrutiny project in 2018-19 and the High Street summit in 2018. The actions arising from the summit have been completed with any new issues related to the areas of focus now picked through existing groups such as the Community Action Group (CAG).
- 4.24** Over the last year, the Southend Creative and Cultural Network (SCCN) has been established to enable creatives to connect and come together to create new opportunities to maximise the potential of creative Southend as distinctive location which attracts and develop skilled workers and residents with enriched lives. They have been involved with work to date and will be engaged with the masterplan development. In developing the options appraisal extensive consultation has taken place with individuals and organisations focusing on the needs of people, to then inform the development of physical assets. The combined feedback led to the creation of user profiles which any new development should look to facilitate.
- 4.25** Concrete Culture has developed as a successful new residents collective in the last year. Their focus is on the reactivation of the Kursaal with culture-led uses and is therefore a partnership with whom further collaboration is planned. Concrete Culture have undertaken extensive public consultation in the town about the building's role and future uses. The second survey has recently been launched and will complete at the end of June and is seeking to develop greater insight in to demand for particular facilities/offerings/opportunities in the future. Culture-led regeneration plans for the High Street would be developed in tandem with plans for the Kursaal to ensure the facilities provided and business plans are complementary rather than in competition. The involvement of grass roots creative and cultural practitioners was another need identified from the Culture Vision discovery and new networks to support the sector have been introduced in the last few months.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1** The options appraisal and Culture Vision principles for culture-led regeneration provide a framework and focus for deriving the benefits set out in paragraph 4.9. They have also helped to inform the design for Elmer Square which, if approved, the first phases will be delivered during 2021/22 with grant and/or capital programme funding to be sought to deliver the remaining phases. If implemented this project will support a number of the recommendations from the scrutiny report 'Reimagining the town centre'. Specifically it will improve feelings of safety, increase footfall in an area of the town centre which has seen much investment

in the Forum, increase dwell time in the centre and energise one of the key squares in the town centre by making the space multi-functional.

5.2 The masterplan lite, to be developed over the next 9 months, will provide an actionable framework for short, medium, and long term investment and delivery which supports a continually evolving and thriving town centre based on the principles of a walkable neighbourhood. It will recognise that intervention and investment in the projects identified through the options appraisal set out at 5.4, the next phases of the Elmer Square design, and other projects which the masterplan work sets out as delivering positive outcomes for the town centre. It will recognise that delivery will not only be by the Council but a range of partners and commercial investors and will set out the case for their investment as well as provide the context and information for funding bids by the Council. It will highlight the potential of the town centre and draw on stakeholders, existing partnerships, such as the Engineroom and Southend BID, and Southend's vibrant creative sector – from grassroots organisations to well established multi-area businesses, to inform the work and its delivery.

5.3 It will be a short, focused piece of work which will build on the work already completed and will deliver:

- A set of clear ambitions for the town centre with a strong spatial, visual element;
- A framework for improvements in the short, medium and longer term taking account of the principles set down in the SCAAP and existing initiatives/plans such as the Green City Action Plan;
- A document which can be used as a prospectus to help guide future investment, funding bids and new inward investment into the area by all landowners including the private sector, the Council and other partners/stakeholders;

5.4 A clear sense of buy-in from the stakeholders involved in the town centre. The options appraisal identified the opportunity to bridge the gap between the needs of the creative sector and the disadvantageous appearance of vacant buildings in the central area of the High Street through looking to secure funding, partners or attracting commercial investors to deliver:

- Production and workshops space to support the creative industries but also community activity and skills development;
- Specific facilities and a 'safe space' for young people (in particular age 0 – 5 and age 14 – 18) to engage with the creative industries outside of formal education;
- Dedicated retail venues or markets for local arts and crafts;
- Project spaces to develop and present artworks or projects;

- Café/restaurant/bar to contribute revenue for the above and contribute to the night-time economy;
- Public realm improvements including public art commissions to reflect Southend as a creative and unique place.

The principles and findings of the Culture Vision, options appraisal and the Elmer Square design will be woven into the masterplan.

- 5.5** The masterplan lite will be developed alongside the new Local Plan ensuring read across and making best use of resident and stakeholder input to inform all areas of work. It will also be undertaken in tandem with the development of a bid to the second round of the Levelling-Up Fund (LUF), creating a framework and evidence base against which the bid will be set. A report brought in parallel with this paper (report number 21/010) sets out the commitment to make a bid to LUF for a package of measures driven by culture-led regeneration in the town centre. The masterplan will not only provide a strong context for the LUF bid but the mix of interventions to be included in the bid will be drawn from this work, taking into account the deliverability and costs, and benefits and outcomes.

6 Other Options

- 6.1** Members could decide not to progress with the masterplan lite work and embedding of culture-led regeneration in the town centre and more widely across the borough. This would reduce the likelihood of the benefits set out in paragraph 4.9 being realised, a lack of focus for investment and development in the town centre and the absence of a framework for the corresponding Levelling-Up Fund bid and any subsequent funding applications.

- 6.2** Members could also decide not to progress with the landscaping of Elmer Square in line with the plans appended. This design has been produced in discussion with the College, University and Focal Point Gallery amongst others so alternatives would require further consultation and would risk undermining the contributions and input to date. This would result in the square remaining in its current form and the need to negotiate the reallocation of the LGF funding prior to its end date or handing the funding back which would be to the detriment of Southend and have a reputational implication.

7 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1** Despite the global pandemic good progress has been made on town centre projects. They are often considered individually rather than as a complete picture so the reports seeks to bring them together to articulate the range of interventions in relation to the outcomes they are collectively delivering while forming the building blocks for next steps. The Options Appraisal has also reaffirmed the need to place this work within a masterplan with culture-led regeneration principles to avoid projects being developed in isolation or competition.

- 7.2** The masterplan lite will set out an ambition and principles for growth and investment in the town centre. This will provide a framework for funding bids and a tool for securing commercial investment in areas which resonate with Southend and help to deliver agreed outcomes.
- 7.3** As plans for the Thames Estuary Production Corridor progress in other areas of the region, Southend is in danger of missing out without clear and committed plans for significant cultural and creative regeneration projects. These recommendations will place the Council in a position to take advantage of new funding as it becomes available to support recovery and economic growth.

8 Corporate Implications

- 8.1** Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map
A number of roadmap projects are included in this report such as Better Queensway, the Local Plan and the town centre itself. It directly contributes to the outcome that “*we have a fast evolving, reimagined and thriving town centre, with an inviting mix of shops, homes, culture and leisure opportunities.*” It also contributes to a number of other related outcomes:
- 8.1.1** *The variety and quality of our outstanding cultural and leisure offer has increased and we have become the first choice English coastal destination for visitors – these plans will service cultural provision currently lacking to increase the offer, and through a town master plan position Southend as a major cultural coastal destination.*
- 8.1.2** *Our streets and public spaces are valued and support the mental and physical wellbeing of residents and visitors – through investment in the public realm in the town centre to improve people’s experience of being there and giving greater reason to dwell.*
- 8.1.3** *People in all parts of the borough feel safe and secure at all times – through the consideration of secure by design principles throughout implementation and Purple Flag criteria to ensure that new spaces are created to design out crime.*
- 8.1.4** *We are well on our way to ensuring that everyone has a home that meets their needs – through recognition that the town centre offers capacity for additional housing in a sustainable location which offers benefits to the residents and the wider town centre community.*
- 8.1.5** *Southend is a place that is renowned for its creative industries, where new businesses thrive and where established employers and others invest for the long term – through the understanding of the role the creative sector can play in enlivening the town centre, in jobs and skills, and in growth of commercial space creating additional reasons for people to use the area.*
- 8.1.6** *Key regeneration schemes, such as Queensway, seafront developments and the Airport Business Park are underway and bringing prosperity and job opportunities to the borough*

8.1.7 *Even more Southenders agree that people from different backgrounds are valued and get on well together* – the options appraisal has undertaken extensive consultation to ensure recommendations create spaces that are open to all, where people from all background can meet and learn through culture and creatively.

8.2 Financial Implications

8.2.1 A requirement for £125,000 to build on the work to date and develop a masterplan lite is proposed to be funded from the Covid Recovery Reserve. Having such a framework and vision in place should serve to attract further external funding and commercial investment in the town centre in the future in areas which contribute towards outcome delivery, such as the Levelling-Up Fund bid set out elsewhere on this cabinet agenda.

8.3 Legal Implications

8.3.1 Any procurement related to the development of the masterplan will be done in compliance with the organisation's corporate procurement rules.

8.3.2 Any changes to the Forum Building and external area will need to be approved by the Forum Management Board. This process has already commenced for the external works.

8.4 People Implications

8.4.1 Delivery of the actions to date have been undertaken within existing resource and partnerships. The next stage will continue to make use of those skills and capacity while also drawing on external expertise.

8.5 Property Implications

8.5.1 Any changes to the Forum Building and external area will need to be approved by the Forum Management Board. This process has already commenced for the external works.

8.6 Consultation

8.6.1 Engagement, co-production, co-design and partnership have been key tenants of interventions in the town centre and have included the partnerships set out in the report. The 2018/19 scrutiny project drew on the insight and experiences of a range of stakeholders as well as making use of the 2050 conversations feedback while Sunrise was predicated on community engagement and co-production. The principles of the new shop front grants and 0% loans were tested with the business community and wide consultation has been undertaken in relation to the major projects at both a project and a planning level.

8.6.2 Extensive consultation has taken place to understand the impact of the halt of the original scheme, and the current needs of residents, visitors and creative professionals that must be considered when creating an alternative plan. The

decision was taken to focus discussion of the needs of people, to then inform the development of physical assets.

8.6.3 Interview consultations have taken place with the following partners; YMCA, ROH Bridge, Chase High School, A Better Start Southend, South Essex College, University of Essex, Swan Housing, Trust Links, SAVS, SECH, South Essex Homes, Creative Estuary, Concrete Culture, TOMA, The Old Waterworks, Southend Culture Network, City Fibre, Creative Estuary, SBC Youth Council, Cultural Assembly, Focal Point Gallery's Advisory Group and SBC colleagues with particular focus children's services and education, vulnerable residents, digital provision, public health and diverse communities.

8.6.4 In addition, results from the following public consultation surveys have been included in establishing the recommendations.

- Culture Vision Survey (July 2020)
- ASELA: What Next for the Creative Industries in South Essex (March 2021)
- Concrete Culture consultation (March 2021)
- 99 by 19 Young People's Consultation (Interim report April 2021)

8.6.5 The combined feedback led to the creation of user profiles for which any new development should look to facilitate. Full user profiles of the following groups can be found in Appendix 3;

- Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Residents
- Working Residents
- Diverse Communities
- Town Centre Leisure Seekers
- Early Years
- School Age
- Teenagers and Young Adults
- Freelance Creative Practitioners
- Students
- Digitally Poor

8.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

8.7.1 Equality and Diversity is at the heart of these recommendations. They aim to increase access to arts and cultural provision, upskilling in digital creativity in the centre of Southend which is demographically lower socioeconomically and in receipt of creative provision. By understanding the landscape through extensive public consultation with a diverse range of residents and user groups, we are able to recognise the needs of people from different communities, particularly those of disadvantaged backgrounds, and design plans accordingly. Individual assessments will be undertaken for the various projects and policy changes as part of their development as appropriate.

8.8 Risk Assessment

- 8.8.1** A risk assessment has not been undertaken on the project report. Where appropriate, risk assessments would be undertaken in relation into the various interventions.
- 8.9** Value for Money
- 8.9.1** This is set out in paragraphs 4.29-4.30 in relation to existing projects.
- 8.9.2** Any work procured to support the development of the masterplan would be subject to a procurement process ensuring value for money.
- 8.10** Community Safety Implications
- 8.10.1** There are no additional community safety implications as a result of this report. Consideration of community safety will be intrinsic to the Masterplan and has been to some of the projects and partnership outlined, such as Purple Flag in reviewing the safety of the night time economy and secured by design principles in Better Queensway.
- 8.11** Environmental Impact
- 8.11.1** The paper identifies a number of interventions underway which directly contribute towards the realisation of the Green City Action Plan. This will be a key consideration for the Masterplan and is a direct ask of some funding bids, such as Levelling-Up.
- 9** **Background Papers**
- Cabinet report 16th January 2020**
Town Centre Scrutiny Project 2018-19
Options appraisal User Profiles
- 10** **Appendices**
- Appendix 1 – Culture Vision**
Appendix 2 - Elmer Square design and phasing



SOUTHEND CULTURE VISION

southendculture.co.uk

Working to make
lives better
www.southend.gov.uk



Foreword.

Southend is one of England's most popular coastal destinations, welcoming over seven million visitors a year.

Southend boasts a diverse cultural scene and is home to a wealth of natural and historic assets, creative organisations and artistic talent.

By working collectively, the local community, public sector and creative practitioners have come together to develop Southend Culture Vision, which builds on the strengths and enthusiasm of our cultural, creative and heritage sector.

It recognises how culture and creativity helps to establish a vibrant sense of place and brings our community together, as well as attracting investment, talent and visitors to the borough.

This Vision has been developed through a series of workshops, surveys and discussions across the borough with our community and cultural networks. It builds upon our achievements to date and outlines areas where we still have room to grow, and how through

new levels of co-operation and joint working, we can maximise the amazing creative potential that exists across the borough.

Delivery of this Vision and its objectives is a purposeful and ambitious endeavour. We recognise that a thriving creative cultural place is an essential driver of social and economic development, and this Vision will need to be strategic and serious. But we also recognise to be successful it must be fun, true to our roots and quintessentially Southend.

We hope you share our excitement for the future. Implementing this Vision will help us to develop a place where creativity creates opportunity, as we continue to build upon the incredible spirit and creativity that already exists in Southend.

Introduction

This Vision sets out an aspirational plan to support the development and growth of our cultural and creative economies across the borough over the next ten years.

It aims to recognise and nurture the energy and creative vision of our local cultural, creative and heritage sector, encouraging new ideas and creative collaborations.

It also aims to increase the opportunities for residents and visitors to experience and enjoy our heritage, the arts and renown cultural experiences.

To achieve this vision we have included a foundational action plan which captures activity over the coming years that will help us to implement the vision and deliver the key themes.

The Vision and action plan will be 'live' and subject to regular review to ensure it adapts to new ideas, technologies and opportunities that will undoubtedly emerge over the coming years.



What is Culture?

20

Culture can mean different things to different people.

It's often used to refer to food, religion and other forms of heritage, but here is used to broadly describe the outputs of museums, galleries, libraries, visual arts, film, music, theatre, craft, dance, literature, festivals and events.

We recognise that traditional boundaries between and around cultural activities are disappearing as new technologies and other societal changes alter how culture is made and shared.

We also refer to Creativity and the Creative Industries:

Creativity describes the process through which people apply their knowledge, skill and intuition to imagine, conceive, express or make something that wasn't there before.

The Creative Industries include a very wide range of jobs, organisations, businesses and educational institutions. These include but are not limited to: Advertising and Marketing; Architecture; Craft; Design (product, graphic, fashion), Film & Broadcast (TV, video, animation, VFX/SFX, radio and photography), Creative Tech (IT, video games, software and computer services), Museums, galleries, library, heritage, Music, dance, performing and visual arts, Publishing.

Why do we need a Culture Vision?

A number of cities across the UK have recognised the role culture and creativity can play in place shaping and economic growth as well as improving health and wellbeing.

Cities such as Newcastle, Hull, Liverpool, Leeds and Bristol have used culture as a regenerative force that has significantly changed the face and perceptions of these cities.

The creative industries are the fastest growing sector in the UK economy.

The Gross Value Added (GVA) of the UK creative industries was estimated at **£115.9bn in 2019.**

This is equivalent to approx. **£13.2m every hour.**

That's a greater economic contribution than the UK's automotive, aerospace, life sciences and oil and gas industries combined.

But more than this, the creative industries drive and unlock innovation, deliver significant social impact, and invest heavily in the regeneration of communities throughout the UK*.

*Source The Creative Industries Council



ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Arts Council England also state three keys facts to highlight why art and culture matters:

- 1.** Art and culture contribute £10.6 billion to the UK economy, culture alone brings £850 million to UK, through tourism, each year.
- 2.** Arts and culture help tackle social injustice: theatres, museums, galleries and libraries are the beating heart of our towns and cities. Not only do they bring prosperity, but they also bring communities together.
- 3.** Our creative industries are a calling card worldwide and have important trading links across the globe. Last year Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations earned £57 million abroad.

Five reasons to support our Vision



1

There is strong evidence that supports the wider benefits of culture, creativity and heritage to our community.

2

Our local cultural and creative sector is rapidly growing and makes a significant contribution to Southend's economy.

3

Southend is well-placed to take advantage of major cultural programmes, including Creative Estuary: part of the Government endorsed Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) Project.

4

Southend has a vibrant and diverse cultural scene and is home to a wealth of natural and historic assets, which require preserving for future generations.

5

We can utilise our cultural and creative sectors to tackle wider societal issues and to help our residents to live healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Context.

Southend Culture Vision is a strategy and action plan that looks to support the borough's cultural and creative growth, activity and investment over the next 10 years.

It's been developed to reflect national and regional plans, along with local strategic priorities which include:



The Government's **Digital, Culture, Media & Sport 2019 Single Departmental Plan** focuses on growing an economy that's creative, innovative and works for everyone by supporting creative industries.

They have highlighted the creative industry as one of six sectors that are prioritised for growth.

Their aim is for the UK to become a world leader in this area.



The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) is one of 38 local enterprise partnerships established to provide the vision and leadership to drive sustainable private sector-led growth and job creation.

set out a **portfolio of sector-led initiatives** to build a self-sustaining, creative and cultural infrastructure in the region.

The impact of these initiatives will enable the South East to become a globally significant location for the creative sector.

As part of the economic plan for the South East, SELEP



Southend 2050 is the borough's shared future ambition of the sort of place residents and stakeholders want Southend to be.

thought Southend should be like in 2050 and what steps are needed to achieve this.

It was developed following extensive conversations that asked people that live, work and visit here, what they

The ambition is grounded in the values of Southenders. It is bold and challenging and will need all elements of our community to work together to make it a reality.

Southend today...

Where are we now?



Creative, cultural, and digital industries are high growth sectors



One of the warmest and driest places in the UK



£87bn annual economic output of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)

4,200,000 population in the SELEP region, with a further 8.9m on the doorstep of Greater London.



182,500 residents. 8.7% population increase predicted by 2020



£3.1 bn GVA



57 schools, 2 colleges and a university



Over 7m visitors per year.



7 miles of award winning beaches.

Creative & Cultural Southend

The Creative and Cultural sector is a significant economic growth area in Southend.

It also represents an incredibly diverse sector composed of arts organisations and Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS).

The creative and cultural industries have significant employment and wealth generating capacity, they also have the ability to create a step change in the economy, retaining and attracting new people to Southend. Creative industries are flourishing in Southend: there's a growing concentration of creative and cultural businesses, and the borough is also home to a number of rich and diverse cultural assets including:

- ▶ Three theatres attracting internationally acclaimed productions, musicians and comedians: Cliffs Pavilion, Palace Theatre and Clifftown Theatre.
- ▶ A live music scene that has produced a number of internationally recognised artists and bands continues to thrive.
- ▶ A number of cultural festivals throughout the year including the Leigh Folk Festival, Southend Carnival, Southend Film Festival and the Leigh Regatta.
- ▶ Internationally significant heritage collections. The Prittlewell Princely Burial at Southend Central Museum is the earliest archaeological evidence of a Christian burial from the Anglo-Saxon period.
- ▶ Two Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations (NPO's)
- ▶ Art galleries such as the Beecroft Gallery with its fine art collection and works from artists including Constable, to Focal Point Gallery with its contemporary arts focus and 'Radical Essex' project.
- ▶ Significant grade 1 listed Scheduled Ancient Monuments, including the 12th century Prittlewell Priory and the 14th century Southchurch Hall
- ▶ Southend Pier, a 19th century grade II listed building that is the longest pleasure pier in the world – Southenders most treasured asset with a celebrated and diverse history that includes an active role in both world wars.

Our Vision | We want to see Southend as a place that...

Embraces and celebrates diversity, and is open and welcome to all.

Has distinct locations that celebrate and promote their individuality, encouraging flow between each.

Is recognised as a year-round destination with a variety of high quality art, culture and heritage experiences.

Invests in creative spaces and infrastructure, to help businesses and people flourish.

26

Proactively welcomes and encourages the discovery of new creative and cultural experiences.

Encourages partnerships and collaboration that support a connected creative community.

Promotes creative innovation, attracts and retains people in its workforce.

Recognises that culture and creativity are integral to our health and wellbeing.

Has meaningful conversations with our community to evaluate progress and influence change.

Showcases its location, history and appeal through its people, buildings, landscapes and experiences.

Our Values

The underpinning values are a set of principles that guide and set out what we do:



Accessibility, diversity & inclusion:

We encourage everyone to engage in quality experiences that showcase our incredible spirit and creativity.



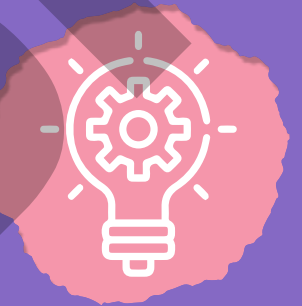
Accountability & economic responsibility:

We use resources effectively to leverage opportunities that optimise value and create impact.



Evaluation:

We regularly evaluate the social, economic and environmental impact of our strategy delivery.



Innovation:

We support forward-thinking solutions that anticipate the future needs of our community.



Partnerships & Collaboration:

We achieve more through meaningful relationships of mutual respect and understanding.



Our Themes |

1 Create the Conditions

2 Share Our Story

3 Places and Spaces

4 Make Life Better

5 Let's Work Together

Southend Culture Vision is structured with an overarching vision that is supported by five themes that we need to focus on to achieve our objectives:

By supporting collaborative working environments, we will develop a stronger, more visible creative and cultural economy that maximise resources, supports innovation and attracts investment. Southend will be nationally recognised as a creative cluster where people, businesses and audiences flourish.

Celebrate and promote our activities, initiatives and successes to a national audience. Encourage broader participation in our cultural programming to develop deep and loyal relationships between audiences, practitioners, venues and organisations.

We will increase our reputation as a cultural and creative hub by maximising resources and reimagining our places and spaces. Our creative community will continue to strengthen and we will continue to be renowned nationally for our authentic, vibrant and diverse cultural experiences.

We want to remove barriers and ensure our community have a wide range of ways to participate in culture, enabling everyone to experience how culture can help to improve wellbeing and make us feel more connected to our place and community.

Southend has an engaged, collaborative, knowledgeable and connected creative community. Improved business-to-business collaboration and partnerships will increase innovation, excellence and sustainability across Southend's creative economy.

SOUTHEND CULTURE VISION

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Screen

Raised seating lawns

Outdoor Exhibition Space

Stage/raised timber seating area

Children's Library Garden

Sculpture

Existing Sign

Containers:
 -Secure Bikes
 -Commercial Hospitality Street Food Offer
 -Integrated Shared Refuse Store
 6 Containers in Each or 12 if Double Height

Secure cycle parking & shared refuse
 Bollards
 Uncovered Cycle/Scooter Park

Seaside Play Area with seating to edges.

Outline Denotes The Forum II

Passing Place

Shared Surface

Existing Private Land

Raised seating area/viewing area stage/big screen

Community Garden

Market Square:
 -Existing Cycles
 -Remove Shelter
 -Existing Paving to Remain
 -Existing Feature Lights to Remain

Overhanging Art

Existing Access Control Bollards

Food Van and Cafe Area

LEGEND

- SITE BOUNDARY - TBC
- HARD LANDSCAPE**
- RESIN BOUND GRAVEL PERMEABLE
- CONCRETE BLOCK PAVING
- CONCRETE BLOCK PAVING. REUSE FROM SITE IF POSSIBLE
- OVERHANGING ART AND LIGHTING
- WAYFINDING ART



STAGE 2 ISSUE

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| REVISION | DATE | DESCRIPTION | ARCHITECT | PARTNER |
|----------|------------|---|-----------|---------|
| S0 P1 | 07.04.2021 | ISSUE FOR REVIEW | EJ | CH |
| S0 P2 | 09.05.2021 | REVISED IN LINE WITH SECOND CONSULTATIONS | EJ | CH |
| S2 P3 | 11.05.2021 | STAGE 2 ISSUE | EJ | CH |

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33a Vittoria Street
 Birmingham
 B1 3ND
 T +44 (0) 121 234 6440
 E birmingham@adp-architecture.com
 www.adp-architecture.com

JOB TITLE:
**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA
 PUBLIC REALM**

DRAWING TITLE:
**LANDSCAPE
 GENERAL
 ARRANGEMENT**

SCALE:
1:500

DRAWING SHEET SIZE:
A1

JOB CODE: **001303** DRAWING NUMBER: **ADP-XX-00-DR- L-1900** REVISION: **S2 P3**

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Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director
(Growth & Housing)

To

Cabinet

On

15 June 2021

Report prepared by: Emma Cooney, Director of Regeneration
& Growth

Agenda
Item No.

8

Levelling Up Fund

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Policy and Resources
Cabinet Member: Councillor Gilbert
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report sets out the proposed approach to applications to the Government's Levelling-Up Fund (LUF) and the outcomes that would be achieved by successful bids.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members agree to submit a bid to the Levelling-Up Fund (LUF) for highways in the first round noting the associated additional capital and revenue costs;
- 2.2 That Members agree to submit a bid to the LUF for the visitor economy in the first round noting the associated additional capital and revenue costs;
- 2.3 That a further bid for culture-led town centre regeneration be developed in the second round as a lead authority for a potential joint bid with Rochford District Council noting the need for associated additional capital and revenue costs for the Council and that Cabinet consider this bid further once the business case has been developed;
- 2.4 That Members agree if these bids are successful, relevant legal agreements are entered into to draw down the funding;
- 2.5 That Cabinet recommend to Council that it approve the addition of £880,000 to the 2021/22 and 2022/23 Capital Investment Programme funded from

borrowing to enable preliminary works associated with this bid to commence for the Leigh Port element of the visitor economy bid;

2.6 That Cabinet recommend to Council that it approve the required additions (including additional resources for match funding) to the Capital Investment Programme, as set out in section 7.2 of the report once the final outcome of the bids are known;

2.7 That Cabinet note the additional revenue implications to the Council of proceeding with these schemes and if the bids are successful that these additional revenue costs will need to be considered as part of the Annual Budget Setting process in February 2022.

3. Background

3.1. On 3rd March 2021 the Levelling-Up Fund (LUF) prospectus¹ was published thereby opening the fund for the first round of bids. The prospectus set out the initial information in relation to the fund. The principles of which include:

- i. Three investment themes of transport, cultural investment, and regeneration and town centres - bids must be focused on at least one of these;
- ii. Each bid can be a bid for an individual project or a package bid consisting of multiple projects. Package bids must clearly explain how their component elements are aligned with each other and represent a coherent set of interventions and can include a mix of projects from the three themes;
- iii. Maximum bid value of £20m, with up to £50m for an exceptional transport bid, with at least 10% match funding (i.e. a £20m bid requires minimum £2m local match funding). If successful, funds must be spent by March 2024;
- iv. Round 1 will prioritise on well-developed bids which can begin to spend before the end of the current financial year;
- v. The number of bids that a local authority in the first category can make relates to the number of MPs in their area. One bid can be submitted for every MP whose constituency lies wholly within a boundary. Where an MP's constituency crosses multiple local authorities, one local authority should take responsibility as the lead bidder and local areas should work together to designate that lead bidder;
- vi. Local authorities can only have one successful bid for each of their allocated number of bids over the lifecycle of LUF;
- vii. Local Authorities should consult local Members of Parliament and a range of local stakeholders across the full geography of a place during

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-prospectus>

the development of the bid;

- viii. Projects should be aligned to and support Net Zero goals; and
- ix. Deadline for submission of round 1 bids is midday 18th June with deadlines for later rounds to be announced.

3.2 Local Authorities across Great Britain have been assessed and categorised as priority 1, 2 or 3 based on a Government methodology. Southend is a priority 1 location, that is to say one which will most benefit from levelling-up while Rochford is a priority 3 location. Bids from priority 1 places are to be prioritised and these areas will receive £125k capacity funding to support the development of bids. However, this will only be paid to eligible Councils after 18th June (i.e. after round 1 bid submission).

3.3 As the Southend East and Rochford parliamentary constituency crosses two local authorities, discussion has taken place with Rochford District Council as to the approach. This has reached agreement that a joint bid, as encouraged by the prospectus, is the best way forward with Southend Council acting as the lead authority.

3.4 Further technical information published following the prospectus confirmed that, in addition to the two bids relating to the number of MPs for Southend, as a highways authority Southend is eligible to make an additional application for highways only schemes. LUF effectively supersedes the pinchpoint funding which Southend has successfully secured funding from previously. An expression of interest had been submitted for a package of junctions in the most recent round. In order for these schemes to be considered for funding they must be re-submitted as part of a LUF bid. The LUF application form requires all business cases to be of a Treasury Green Book Appraisal standard. On 4th May the FAQs relating to the funding were published.

4 Proposed Bids

4.1 Southend can make up to three LUF bids. This section of the report seeks to outline the planned focuses, outcomes, timing and values.

Highways Bid

4.2 As set out in paragraph 3.3, schemes previously submitted for the last round of pinchpoint funding must be re-submitted to LUF if they are to be considered for grant funding. The Council had developed a package of schemes for pinchpoint, following engagement with Councillors in December 2019, which are considered key improvements to maintain junction capacity. These are:

- Harp House roundabout
- A127 Victoria Avenue junctions with East Street / West Street and with Fairfax Drive and Prittlewell Chase
- A127 Progress Road & Bellhouse Road

- 4.3** The interrelated junctions are connectively linked via the A127 and the A1159 and these routes form part of Southend's key vehicular corridors carrying inbound and outbound commuter and leisure traffic and freight across the Borough and are located on Southend's Major Road Network (MRN) and Primary Distributer Routes. The schemes have been designed to complement completed pinch-point schemes within the Borough. Whilst each scheme could be delivered independently, they have been designed as a single interrelated improvement scheme to fully maximise their intended benefits.
- 4.4** Investment at these junctions is critical in delivering the infrastructure necessary to support background and planned growth across Southend. Building on the previous interventions the schemes are intended to further smooth the flow of traffic on the strategic highway network, improving safety along with lowering journey times for businesses, visitors and residents alike. In addition, these schemes will have a positive impact on air quality and assist with meeting challenging national CO2 targets reductions. They also contribute to delivery of the 2050 outcomes and the Council's recovery priorities around travel and transport, and major schemes.
- 4.5** The Highways bid will seek £15m LUF funding over 3 financial years matched by £1.7m funding which is not yet in the capital programme. This meets the LUF requirement for minimum 10% local match funding. This would start with advanced utilities work on notification of a successful bid followed by the main construction works to be completed by March 2024.
- 4.6** This bid is considered to meet the LUF criteria. The prospectus states that the fund is looking for proposals for high-impact small and medium schemes which, among other outputs, cut congestion, support economic growth and improve the experience of transport users with "*enhancements and upgrades to local road networks (e.g. by-passes and junction improvements)*" given as an example of the type of project welcomed by the scheme. An all Member workshop was held prior to the Pinch Point submission to assist and inform the locations chosen for further consideration.
- 4.7** The previous pinchpoint application was at expression of interest stage rather than Green Book Appraisal as required by LUF. While there is a significant amount of work already in place in relation to these designs, additional capacity, procured from external specialist advisors, has been required to undertake the additional work necessary to reach the required standard whilst allowing the Highways team sufficient capacity to continue to deliver against the existing capital programme alongside bid development. However, by building on the existing work on these schemes, it is considered possible to meet the submission deadline and the ensuing requirement for spend this financial year if successful.

Visitor Economy

- 4.8** The Visitor Economy bid will secure and enhance key assets in the Southend visitor economy offer with a focus on Leigh Port, the Cliffs Pavilion and wider safety measures. This will encourage greater visitor footfall, more visitor spend, and support a shift to staycations. Similar to the Highways bid, these projects build on existing work and investment so have a solid evidence base to support

a first round submission and ability to mobilise for spend this financial year if successful. They also complement each other through a shared narrative shaped by the visitor economy and making more of the wide range of assets the borough offers.

- 4.9** The case for investment in the visitor economy as a tenant of the wider Southend economy is well evidenced. The 2019 Volume and Value study of the economic impact of tourism² in Southend identifies that it accounts for over 7,500 FTE jobs (16.9% of all employment) contributing a value of £470m to the economy. It is a strategic sector in the Growth Strategy and last year the sector worked together to refresh Destination Southend, the tourism strategy. Its significance is also reflected in the 2050 outcomes as *we seek to increase the variety and quality of our outstanding cultural and leisure offer for our residents and visitors and to become the region's first choice coastal tourism destination*. The roadmap also sets out a number of projects and investments, such as the Cliffs Pavilion, as milestones on that journey.
- 4.10** Initial work relating to Leigh Port was commissioned by the North Thames Fisheries Local Action Group (NTFLAG) (which the Council agreed to partner in a report of March 2017). This has subsequently led to further work and the opportunity to submit a full business case for some Growing Places Funding (GPF) from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), however the funding won't meet the full costs of the interventions necessary and as a revolving loan fund need to be repaid which is more challenging to achieve. Mott MacDonald have been retained to continue the expertise they have provided on the subject to date to complete the LUF business case.
- 4.11** The port is a small expanse of land (c. 7,500sqm) at the opening of the River Thames, spanning roughly 180m of the Southend coastline. The reclaimed area provides boat access, as well as housing 16 cockle sheds where cockles are cooked, processed and sold, as well as housing a small amount of light industry. It is estimated to account for 15-25% of the total UK annual cockle yield³ and as such attracts visitor interest with the potential to attract more. In assessing the future of the industry post-Brexit, a recent independent study undertaken finds that while there are challenges for the fishing industry the extent to which they threaten the viability of fishing in Leigh seems limited and that the proposed improvements to the port would assist with its stability. Old Leigh and the port is one of Southend's top visitor attractions on Tripadvisor. The project will involve construction of a new quay wall frontage, improvements to site access, dredging of the area beside the quay wall and channel, and resurfacing of the wharf to make the port a safe place to work and visit. Maintaining the sustainability of the port is central to the objectives of the project.
- 4.12** The Cliffs Pavilion is one of the top 10 regional theatres in England and welcomes approx. 500,000 customers each year. The role of this theatre as part of the broader visitor economy is significant as it hosts major shows that result in a wide catchment supporting the night-time economy and longer staying overnight visitors. The theatre is owned by the Council and operated by HQ Theatres which

² The results are derived using the Cambridge Economic Impact Model under licence by Destination Research Ltd based on the latest data from national tourism surveys and regionally/locally based data.

³ Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority – Thames Estuary Cockle Survey Report 2015

is proven a successful formula. To continue to attract the major shows and develop audiences, significant investment is needed to enhance the visitor experience for this 1960's building. Elements of this such as improved hospitality and guest areas will have a commercial return and are part of a business plan going forward, however some aspects of the building infrastructure requires updating but will have no commercial return. These public spaces and overall building refurbishment are built into this bid and will be complemented by significant investment from both the council and the operator.

- 4.13** The Council is undertaking to strengthen pedestrian safety in its main High Street and central seafront area, controlling and restricting vehicular access in these high footfall areas. An automated bollards system and other fixed measures are being installed in Southend High Street, and implementing safety measures on the central seafront area as part of a cohesive design project, that will visually improving the site, provide environmental improvements and also enhance the visitor experience with new fixtures, including new elevated rain gardens, and granite type seating blocks and art installations.
- 4.14** As indicated above this proposal will secure and enhance key assets in the Southend visitor economy offer. This in turn will encourage greater visitor footfall, more visitor spend, and support a shift to staycations. Specifically in terms of the recovery priorities the bid includes projects that will help to rebuild and support the local economy and strongly position Southend economically for the future, enabling the town to draw in opportunities and secure investment. As part of the work to complete the business case the value of the benefits will be quantified and there will be a full Value for Money assessment.
- 4.15** If successful, work will commence during 2021/22 and will be completed prior to 31 March 2024.
- 4.16** The bid will seek LUF investment of £20m and will require £5.5m local match funding. The corresponding additions to the capital programme would be costs the Council would need meet as part of its landlord and local authority responsibilities over a period of time but by including this in LUF it benefits from leveraging external investment.
- 4.17** This package of measures is considered to meet the LUF criteria telling a cohesive narrative across the investments aligned with the priority investment themes.
- 4.18** In preparing for a successful bid outcome the remaining survey and ground investigation work needs to be commenced at Leigh Port in advance of the LUF decision. Initiating such works now will facilitate securing necessary approvals and use of the findings to inform the detailed design and tender specification. It will also support project start this financial year, as per the LUF prospectus, and allow a maximum window for completion before the March 2024 deadline. The estimated cost of these works is £880,000 and provision will need to be made in the capital investment programme to provide a budget for these costs if the bid is to proceed. If this work is not undertaken until after the LUF funding decision it will not be possible to deliver the project before March 2024. The £880k will be split over financial years 21/22 and 22/23 to reflect both the need to start work

immediately and the duration of some aspects, such as bird surveys, taking upto a year to complete.

Culture-led Regeneration and Town Centres

- 4.19** Culture led regeneration and Town Centres are subjects of a substantial amount of recent and ongoing work in Southend being undertaken both by the Council and partners. This amount of focus and investment reflects the priority they have as part of the Southend 2050 ambition and the underpinning role they play across a number of themes and outcomes. This work is set out in a separate related report elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda and provides further depth and context to a proposed LUF bid concentrated on culture-led regeneration in town centres.
- 4.20** Southend town centre is a widely recognised priority for Southend. It is a 2050 outcome, a recovery priority and has been the focus of a joint in-depth scrutiny project in recent years. It has benefitted from a range of funding but, like town centres up and down the country, continues to be challenged by some of the national trends including the effects of the pandemic. The ambition for a thriving, evolving, vibrant town centre still holds true and has been reinforced by recent work exploring the role of culture-led regeneration (set out in the accompanying report).
- 4.21** The Culture Vision is the result of an extensive piece of work co-produced with the creative and cultural sector as well as our residents. It highlights the wide-reaching potential of the sector and sets out principles to support the development and growth of Southend's cultural and creative economies across the borough over the next ten years. This is shaped by five themes and a set of underpinning principles for culture-led regeneration across the borough. The importance of heritage has been a significant theme highlighted through the development of this vision. Southend's key internationally significant collections of the Prittlewell Prince and London Shipwreck are particularly important to develop further in future plans. Southend's Culture Vision has been developed in partnership with many stakeholders.
- 4.22** Alongside the Culture Vision, Focal Point Gallery has led on a piece of work over recent months which has been widely engaged and consulted on the needs of people in the sector to then inform the development of physical assets. This has identified a need for further investment in the physical infrastructure if it is to fulfil its economic, skills, wellbeing and community potential. It sets out a number of potential interventions which would help unlock these opportunities, such as remodelling the Elmer Square and creating a cultural arts and education quarter in the central High Street area utilising underused space. This follows a similar principle to the Cultural Development Zone put forward in the Town Centre scrutiny project report. This, together with the Culture Vision provides a framework for culture-led regeneration going forward.
- 4.23** The framework developed will be applied across the borough to bring about the benefits identified for Southend residents, businesses and visitors. Looking through this lens to develop the LUF bid, opportunities which meet the bid criteria and which could form part of a coherent package may be identified in and around local centres such as Shoebury.

- 4.24** In tandem, residents have formed a strong collective of professionals from across the Creative sector, Education, Business, Design, and Food, with international culture and arts experience – called Concrete Culture, Southend. This group are committed to co-production with and for residents. Concrete Culture are focused on reactivating the Kursaal for community, education, learning, and entrepreneurship. They have undertaken a consultation survey in the town which produced 1,100 replies from all wards, proving community interest in the future of the Kursaal. The second, full survey, has c.800 completed responses; the results are being analysed at the time of writing. Further sector specific data analysis is also planned. The work of Concrete Culture aligns with the Culture Vision and Options appraisal. Their vision for the Kursaal is to provide community space that will allow local people to create, work, learn, and grow-up through the building. This would provide a medium sized multi-use venue; a business mix of commercial and subsidised activities; cross art form including performance; cross platforms; early years provision through a partnership with A Better Start Southend; and an intergenerational offer with something for everyone.
- 4.25** It is proposed that the breadth of the work and consultation undertaken to date to identify the needs of residents and the creative industries in Southend, together with its findings are brought together and built on to develop an actionable ‘masterplan’ for Southend town centre within a clear timeframe. This will provide a framework for short, medium, and long term investment and delivery in support of a continually evolving and thriving town centre. It will recognise that intervention and investment will not only be by the Council but a range of partners and commercial investors and will make the business case for their investment as well as that for the LUF application and other funding bids by the Council. As such, the masterplan will not only provide a strong context for the LUF bid but the mix of interventions to be included in the bid will be drawn from this work, taking into account the deliverability and operating models, and benefits and outcomes.
- 4.26** There is therefore a clear narrative around the opportunity for culture-led regeneration having a deep, place-making impact in town centres. This corresponds with two of the LUF investment priorities. However, for a robust bid with the best chance of success to be made, substantial further work is needed to meet the assessment criteria, and this includes detailed costings not only for the capital investment but also the business model for any spaces activated or created, engagement with landowners, including the owners of the Kursaal lease and the development of the town centre masterplan as a framework and context. It is therefore proposed to submit a culture-led regeneration application in relation to town centres in the second round.
- 4.27** This is not reflective of it being a lesser priority than the bids to be submitted in the first round, rather that the additional time between now and the second round of LUF will allow completion of the necessary work and integration of the different elements into a Green Book standard business case best placed for a successful outcome.
- 4.28** Evidence highlights that culture-led regeneration can have positive effects on myriad socio-economic factors. From health and wellbeing to skills and learning, and from commercial opportunity to social connection, it underpins and adds value

to a number of the 2050 outcomes and recovery priorities. It is expected that outcomes from this bid will include investment in and activation of space in the town centre, increasing the opportunities for residents, visitors and businesses to engage with the cultural sector, growth of employment and skills in the sector, and anchoring Southend in Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) bringing further profile, pride and investment.

- 4.29** The exact dates for the second round of LUF are yet to be confirmed but it is expected that it will open for bids later this year and will be followed by further bidding rounds.

5 Other Options

- 5.1** Members could decide not to submit two bids in the first round of LUF and to wait for later rounds. This would not disadvantage Southend but would pause delivery of the projects in waiting for following rounds to open. Further it could be decided not to pursue any LUF bids and focus on existing projects in the capital programme. This would be to the detriment of Southend both in terms of the funding which could be attracted to deliver existing 2050 priorities while supporting economic recovery, and in terms of reputation and actively pursuing levelling-up and growth ambitions.
- 5.2** Alternatively, Members could decide to pursue other projects for the three bids. This would automatically shift the focus to submissions in round 2 and later given the extensive work required in developing business cases of this nature. Such bids would still be bound by the same financial, thematic and delivery criteria. As the bids recommended for approval are rooted in consultation and delivery of 2050 outcomes, this could risk disenfranchisement and reputational damage amongst stakeholders and delay economic recovery.

6 Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1** The two proposals are recommended for progressing to bid stage based on stakeholder feedback, contribution to 2050 outcomes and recovery priorities, and being grounded in extensive work setting out the nature of the work to be done and the impact it will make.
- 6.2** The bids recommended for submission in the first round are considered by officers and procured independent specialist capacity, to be compliant with the LUF criteria and make a compelling case.
- 6.3** The culture-led regeneration and town centre bid is recommended for submission in the second round to allow more time for developing the detail necessary for a robust business case and ensuring the proposed investments complement and enhance other strategic projects as part of a considered masterplan.

7. Corporate Implications

- 7.1** Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map

The outcomes and benefits to be gained from these three bids cut across a significant number of the Southend 2050 outcomes as set out below. Financially

they will lever over £6 for every £1 of Council spend therefore, in the short term, enabling outcome delivery at a significantly lower cost to Southend and in the longer term enabling greater outcome delivery as Council finances are protected by external funding through a forthcoming difficult financial period for the Council. If successful, the LUF funded projects themselves will support some of Southend's key sectors, driving up footfall and spend, thereby safeguarding and potentially creating jobs. They will also enhance the visitor offer, deliver improvements to traffic flows, environmental impact and community cohesion.

7.1.1 There is a tangible sense of pride in the place and local people are actively, and knowledgeable, talking up Southend. *Through continuing to invest in the visitor offer together with the evidenced impact of culture on pride in place.*

7.1.2 The variety and quality of our outstanding cultural and leisure offer has increased for our residents and visitors and we have become the region's first choice coastal tourism destination. *Through the development and delivery against a culture-led regeneration approach which broadens the opportunity for greater cultural and leisure offer while directly investing in particular assets.*

7.1.3 Our streets and public spaces are valued and support the mental and physical wellbeing of residents and visitors. *The town centre is a public space for which people have great affinity. Investing in public realm and reasons to spend time there is evidenced to drive up footfall so increasing numbers of people benefit.*

7.1.4 Southenders are remaining well enough to enjoy fulfilling lives, throughout their lives. *Engagement with culture is proven to contribute towards an individual's health and wellbeing.*

7.1.5 We act as a Green City with outstanding examples of energy efficient and carbon neutral buildings, streets, transport and recycling. *Contributing towards Net Zero is an expectation within bidding guidance.*

7.1.6 Even more Southenders agree that people from different backgrounds are valued and get on well together. *Cultural assets and activities can create times and spaces which support community wellbeing and understanding.*

7.1.7 Residents are routinely involved in the design and delivery of services. *Evidence of meaningful consultation and engagement with residents and stakeholders is a key tenant of the LUF prospectus.*

7.1.8 We have a fast-evolving, re-imagined and thriving town centre, with an inviting mix of shops, homes, culture and leisure opportunities. *The town centre is to be the focus of a bid building on work already undertaken and currently underway.*

7.1.9 Our children are school and life ready and young people are ready for further education, training or employment. *Engagement with culture plays a significant role in enriching learning experiences as well as presenting a viable and vibrant career choice.*

7.1.10 Southend is a place that is renowned for its creative industries, where new businesses thrive and where established employers and others invest for the long term. *Specifically seeking opportunities to create and activate spaces for the creative industry and supports new businesses and entrepreneurs in the sector. Also improved road networks can facilitate movement around the borough for work and business.*

7.1.11 Southend provides fulfilling careers for our residents, and enough job roles to match the needs of the population. *Investing in the visitor economy, and therefore attracting more visitors and greater spend, should thereby create more and a wider variety of jobs. Similarly the creative sector offers an exciting and growing range of career opportunities.*

7.1.12 People have a wide choice of transport options. *This includes investing in highways to ensure they operate well.*

7.1.13 Southend is a leading digital city with world class infrastructure that reflects equity of digital provision for the young, vulnerable and disadvantaged. *Digital is a growing part of the creative sector and must be considered when investing in the sector.*

7.2 Financial Implications

7.2.1 Capacity Funding

As a priority 1 location the Council will receive £125k capacity funding on or after 18th June in support of future bid development. It is still not clear whether this can be applied for costs incurred in the development of round 1 bids. Therefore £100k of Business Transformation Reserve (BTR) funding has been earmarked to fund the additional and specialist capacity needed to develop the two first round bids. It will therefore be a combination of LUF capacity funding and BTR which together will fund the development of the three bids.

7.2.2 Highways Bid

The Highways bid will be for £15m LUF funding matched by £1.7m of new capital funding by the Council. If the bid is successful, the total of £16.7m would need to be added to the capital investment programme for highways investment and would need to be delivered in line with the scheme terms and conditions timescales. The annual running and maintenance costs of this new investment will need to be funded from within the existing Highways service budget.

7.2.3 Visitor Economy Bid

The Visitor Economy bid will be for £20m LUF funding matched by £5.5m capital funded by the Council. If the bid is successful £25.5m would need to be added to the capital investment programme and again would need to be delivered in line with the schemes terms and conditions timescales. Ongoing annual maintenance costs are being clarified as part of the development of the business case but currently there is no indication of how they will be funded. Any revenue costs falling to the Council, which could be sizeable, will need to form part of the relevant year's budget setting process and that Members note

this will be in addition to the current Medium Term Financial Plan budget gap of circa £26m.

7.2.4 Culture-led Regeneration Bid

The value of this bid will be finalised through the next phases of development work. Given the extent of the opportunities presented it is envisaged that the bid will be towards the maximum bid value of £20m and therefore c£2m match funding will be required. As far as is possible this will be sought from the existing capital investment programme together with match funding from Rochford District Council proportionate to the grant funding sought for delivery in the district as part of the package of measures around culture-led regeneration in south east Essex. It should be noted that if the bid is successful, the total value not already in the existing capital investment programme would need to be added as the Council would be lead authority, but some of these monies would be funded by contributions from Rochford District Council and/or other partners. Any revenue costs falling to the Council, which will be sizeable given the outline scheme, will need to form part of the relevant year's budget setting process and that Members note this will be in addition to the current Medium Term Financial Plan budget gap of circa £26m.

7.2.5 Overall, if all three bids are successful this would mean adding circa £64m to the Council's Capital Investment Programme, of which £55m would be from LUF alongside match funding of c. £9.2m. The first round bids require new match funding from the Council of £7.2m and the second round bid unless existing capital programme schemes can be identified will add a further £2m. If this is all new match funding this would add circa £630k per annum in additional annual financing costs to the Council's current Medium Term Financial Plan budget gap of circa £26m. In addition the associated operational and maintenance costs of the projects will be significant and whilst all options to for the projects to be self-financing and/or shared to the greatest extent possible; will be explored, there is a high risk that the significant revenue costs will also add to the Council's Medium Term financial Plan budget gap. Members will therefore need to reprioritise revenue budgets and/or deliver further revenue savings to ensure the appropriate revenue budget is available to support the running of these schemes, whilst still producing an annual robust budget.

7.2.6 Adding £64m to the Council's capital investment programme to be delivered in strict government timescales will require a major reprioritisation of the programme to ensure timely delivery of these key strategic projects. If the bids are successful officers will undertake this reprioritisation work for a future cabinet decision.

7.2.7 To progress the Leigh Port element of the Visitor Economy bid certain works (paragraph 4.18) will be required to progress now and over the next year or so to ensure timely progress of the project,. Therefore additional funding needs to be agreed of £880k to be added to the capital investment programme to be funded by borrowing. This will add a further £62,000 of additional financing costs to the council's medium term financial plan. If the scheme does not progress then these costs will need to be written off against the council's revenue budget.

7.3 Legal Implications

7.3.1 If successful the projects will have to be delivered in compliance with LUF terms and conditions with a grant funding agreement or equivalent in place setting these out. Delivery of these interventions will present a range of legal implications from procurement compliance to appropriate notices for works. These will be factored in as part of project plans and monitored through corresponding governance arrangements. The cooperation of the Cockleshed tenants will also be important and necessary for the Leigh Port project to be delivered and this co-operation brings risks of further costs and delay.

7.4 People Implications

7.4.1 Developing the bids has and will be undertaken through a combination of officer time, procured specialists and stakeholder engagement. If successful, delivery of the projects will have a sizable draw on officer time which will be a consideration for capacity to deliver the totality of the capital programme and other interventions. Dedicated resource will be built into the bids where possible and appropriate.

7.5 Property Implications

7.5.1 There are several property implications across the three bids if successful. These include premises and sites in Council ownership such as Cockle wharf, the Kursaal lease and the highway. These will be managed through the appropriate routes ensuring consents are in place, assets are protected, and maintenance considerations built in for the future. It is expected that there will also be considerations for town centre properties not in Council ownership. These will be identified through the bid development.

7.6 Consultation

7.6.1 Consultation with MPs and a wide range of stakeholders is a requirement for LUF. Both Members of Parliament for Southend have been briefed on the proposed approach.

7.8.2 Extensive consultation has been undertaken establishing the need and opportunity relating to culture-led regeneration and the town centre by Concrete Culture and Focal Point Gallery. This will be built upon for the masterplan lite, set out in the accompanying report, and in the development of the bid.

7.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

7.7.1 The levelling up agenda will contribute significantly towards the areas of deprivation in the Borough. Three of our most deprived wards connect to the town centre area and the role of a culture led regeneration project will support opportunities for marginalised members of the community. An accessible culture programme has already begun and significant work led on by Focal Point Gallery shows how culture can play a leading role in changing attitudes.

7.8 Risk Assessment

7.8.1 Southend is a priority 1 area and as such bids submitted will be prioritised. Bids are being developed to accord with the fund criteria while meeting investment needs in Southend. As a competitive fund the grant funding is not guaranteed and therefore there is a risk that one or more submission isn't successful. This is mitigated by the ability to resubmit in later rounds in line with the guidance that states that local authorities can only have one successful bid for each of their allocated number of bids over the lifecycle of the Fund. So, if a local authority with three bid slots submits three bids in the first round, and is successful in each of them, they will not be eligible to re-bid in the following rounds. If the local authority is successful in two out of the three, they would be able to put in one further bid in the next round, and so on.

7.8.2 The addition of some £55m of grant funding plus match funding to the capital programme over the next 3 years will require a reprofile of the programme so as to ensure there is sufficient capacity to enable these projects and the rest of the capital programme to be delivered and in compliance with funding deadlines where they apply.

7.8.3 If successful each project will have its own risk register.

7.9 Value for Money

7.9.1 A value for money assessment is a requirement of the business cases to be submitted with a need to demonstrate a minimum of 1.5:1 but preferably 2:1.

7.10 Community Safety Implications

7.10.1 Security measures are included as part of the Visitor Economy bid explicitly, seeking to ensure that residents and visitors alike are safe when enjoying Southend's visitor offer.

7.11 Environmental Impact

7.11.1 Contribution towards net zero and the wider environmental agenda is a consideration within the LUF prospectus and will be addressed as part of the business cases.

8. Background Papers

None

9. Appendices

None

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

12

Report of the Chief Executive
To
Cabinet

On
15 June 2021

Report prepared by: Sarah Brown, Policy Advisor

Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) - update

Relevant Scrutiny Committee(s): Policy and Resources;
Cabinet Member: Councillor Ian Gilbert
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report and desired outcomes

- 1.1 To provide an update on developments in relation to ASELA and to formally agree to become a member of a joint committee of constituent members to oversee ASELA and provide enhanced transparency and accountability in the new delivery stage of its work programme.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Cabinet note the updates provided in this report.**
- 2.2 **To formally agree to become a member of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) Joint Committee in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, to oversee ASELA and provide enhanced transparency and accountability in the new delivery stage of its work programmes.**
- 2.3 **To approve the governance arrangements of the joint committee as set out in Appendix 1 and the related Joint Committee Agreement and Terms of Reference.**
- 2.4 **That the Leader of the Council is appointed to represent the Council on the Joint Committee.**
- 2.5 **That the Council appoints a deputy representative to substitute for the Leader, in line with the Part 7 of the Constitution.**

3. Background

- 3.1 On 22 July 2020, Cabinet, considered a report from ASELA that provided an update on progressing the economic agenda for the South Essex region. At that meeting Cabinet agreed to fully support a collaboration with South Essex Authorities to deliver regeneration across south Essex. It also agreed that the Council should:
- 3.1.1 *Discuss with Government and the Districts/Boroughs of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford and Thurrock, the formulation for South Essex of a joint arrangement to deal with a defined number of cross boundary and strategic*

matters. Such arrangement to be made up of elected members of the constituent local authorities, supported as appropriate by representatives of the local LEP and other relevant stakeholders, under terms of reference to be agreed by those local authorities;

- 3.2 The minute of that meeting was called in to a meeting of the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee and referred to a special full Council on 30 July 2020, which noted the minute and agreed not to refer the matter back to Cabinet for reconsideration.
- 3.3 Since the Council meeting, briefings for all councillors were held in relation to the then anticipated Devolution White Paper and ASELA and the information provided made available to all councillors. In addition, the ASELA/Local Government Reform Working Party was formally constituted and has met on 2 September (informally), 28 October and 11 February to receive updates on ASELA and Local Government Reform.
- 3.4 The working party was informed that the Government has said that the Devolution White Paper will be produced 'in due course', and it will have a focus more on recovery than devolution.
- 3.5 ASELA Leaders have scoped the terms of reference of a new joint committee outlining the main features and how it would operate in practice. An outline proposal was agreed on 21 January 2021 and has been developed to share amongst prospective Councils.
- 3.6 On 10th February 2021, Thurrock Council Cabinet approved the establishment of a joint committee, as set out in **Appendix 1** Terms of Reference, to oversee ASELA.
- 3.7 The remaining local authority partners are expected to put decisions to their respective Council meetings in the 2021 new municipal year.
- 3.8 The ASELA/Local Government Reform Working Party also met on 7 June 2021, to consider this report and was content for the report to proceed (See minutes of the meeting elsewhere on the agenda).

4.0 ASELA Update

4.1 ASELA ambition

- 4.1.2 ASELA is a partnership of neighbouring councils that have come together to deliver growth and prosperity in the region. The local authority partners are Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock, and Essex County Council.
- 4.1.3 ASELA has spent the past three years looking at how working together across local government boundaries will help deliver improved infrastructure and economic growth. ASELA aims to support the south Essex region to be a UK leader in economic recovery, and drive sustained economic growth and prosperity within its communities. There is a bold and ambitious plan to create greater prosperity and quality of life for all its residents and for the benefit of the UK. Part of this plan will be to ensure its businesses and residents recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, improve the economy locally and nationally as well as deliver the housing targets set by government.

- 4.1.4 On 31 July 2020, ASELA submitted a [Growth and Recovery Prospectus](#) to central government. The ambition outlines ten delivery programmes across five key themes (Economy, Transport & Connectivity, Infrastructure & Housing, Climate & Environment, and Vibrant Communities) and will see south Essex contribute an additional £15 billion to the UK economy and create 100,000 new jobs by 2050.
- 4.1.5 These programmes will directly and indirectly benefit Southend and its residents. Specifically, in Southend, the programme has the potential to deliver:
- a. An uplift in economic value of £2.368bn per annum by 2050 (from £2.852bn to £5.220bn).
 - b. Increase the number of jobs from 76,700 to 100,600 – 23,900 new jobs.
 - c. Improve productivity per job from £37,200 to £51,800 - £14,600 per job.
 - d. 3,690 homes which already have planning permission but may otherwise be stalled (to contribute to the government’s housing need target of 23.5k homes).
 - e. The ambitions outlined in the South Essex Connectivity Strategy, and, to enable the ability to collaborate and deliver on Southend’s future road infrastructure needs (which, in part, sit outside of the borough).
- 4.1.6 On 11 February 2021, the ASELA/Local Government Reform Working Party received an update on the achievements to date and planned work of the delivery programmes, including confirmed capacity funding from Homes England, with a summit meeting having taken place with Small Medium Sized Enterprises on the infrastructure and housing programme, an award-winning blue and green infrastructure design for the South Essex Estuary Park, and a specialist team being appointed to develop a feasibility study for the New Generation University.

5. Anchor Programmes

- 5.1 In 2021, ASELA will enhance focus on delivery of five ‘anchor programmes’:
1. Superfast Digital
 2. Thames Freeport
 3. Technical University
 4. South Essex Estuary (SEE) Park
 5. Infrastructure and Housing

The latest position (as at 3 June) on these is outlined below.

- **Superfast Digital** – the principal objective of this programme is to provide gigabit connectivity to every household and premises by 2025. The Local Full Fibre Network project which is funded by DCMS delivers fibre to public sector facilities (including fire, GPs and health care) remains on track and on budget to achieve delivery to over 150 sites by the end of the month. Plans are now being developed to join all the fibre together to create a single public service network. This activity is attracting significant private sector investment and up to £100m has now been committed to South Essex by Openreach, Virgin and CityFibre collectively. The next phase of this programme will be to establish a private sector led board and start to develop the digital solutions that will be at the heart of the Thames Freeport, the Technical University and the South Essex Estuary Park;
- **Thames Freeport** – the Government announced in the Chancellor’s March Budget, that the Thames Freeport was one of eight successful bids. The Freeport

is private sector led (DP World, Forth Ports, and Ford) and covers the geography of the local authorities of Thurrock, LB Havering LB Barking and Dagenham. Thurrock Council are the lead local authority and the accountable body for public sector investment. Since March the Government have agreed the interim governance arrangements and approved initial capacity funding of £300k. Work on an Outline Business Case is now underway and the target is to submit to Government by 31st July. Simultaneously work is in train to establish Tax and Custom sites within the Freeport area. These bring significant financial incentives to the private sector partners and the potential for business rate retention for the designated areas. The initial feasibility study identified substantial economic benefits including over 25,000 new jobs and over £5bn of inward investment. In addition, the priority policy objective is to use the Freeport as a catalyst for regeneration and levelling up deprived communities. These benefits and policy areas will be tested and expanded as part of the business case development over the following weeks;

- **Technical University** – in March Leaders approved the feasibility study for a technical university. The intention is to create degree apprenticeships with local employers, providing opportunities for local people, leading to high skill local jobs. This is a business led venture, with a number of the leading businesses in the area identifying requirements for both young people and reskilling of existing employees. A Partnership Board has now been established, which includes senior representation from DP World, Leonardos, Olympus, Nat West Bank, Ford, and Southend Airport. Higher Education providers are also represented through Anglian Ruskin Univesity, University of Essex and the University of East Anglia. The programme will reach into the school system to encourage students from communities that wouldn't historically have considered higher skills as attainable. The next steps that are now underway include the procurement of a Higher Education provider for the first tranche of degree apprenticeship courses, starting in September 2023, and the development of the full business case by November 2021.
- **South Essex Estuary Park (SEE Park)** – This flagship programme aims to provide an extraordinary parkland setting that encompasses all of South Essex, bringing environmental, social, and economic value to the region. It will cover 1/3 of South Essex at 23,000ha (in line with government's aim of protecting 30% of England's countryside by 2030) and will comprise five large-scale landscapes, selected because of their capacity to perform multiple functions, while offering many benefits. ASELA leaders gave support for pressing ahead with building the case for investment in the SEE Park and for working up more detailed proposals to deliver a pathfinder implementation project across the Central Thames Marshlands. Since then work has been underway to design an implementation approach around creating early successes; building momentum and confidence with local residents and investors alike. Initial activity over the next 12-24 months will be focussed around four workstreams:
 - Launching the SEEPark - with a distinctive branding, establishing a marketing & comms plan with web/social media presence; and creating options for a future operating model;
 - Development of a Landscape framework plan - and design guide to ensure future development work across the 5 constituent landscapes reflects the GBI Strategy and objectives;

- Delivery of the Central Thames Pathfinder - as a 'demonstrator' project with a series of wave1 implementation deliverables within an initial 18-month period;
- Creating a Green Finance Strategy – looking to access Government grant / capacity funding in the short-term and to build a long-term green investment model to attract private sector infrastructure funding.

A case for investment has been developed and it describes the work and resource envelope (c.£7.5m) that will be needed to get the SEE Park up and running and to deliver the Central Thames Marshlands pathfinder. The majority of funding for this will need to be sourced from outside of direct investments from ASELA Local Authorities; through a combination of, related strategic programmes such as Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) and Thames Free Port (TFP), Government capacity funding and private sector green financing models. This is the main area of focus over the coming months;

- **Infrastructure and Housing** – the focus of this programme is the provision of infrastructure and homes that are needed to support the economy and meet existing housing needs. Over the last 12 months a detailed pipeline of housing schemes has been developed with a specific focus on schemes that are stalled because of issues of viability. By working together across all South Essex Local Authorities, the area has been able to create a compelling case for a trail blazing strategic place based partnership with Homes England. Now agreed in principle, by the Homes England Executive Board, it will be just one of two such partnerships in the country. A Memorandum of Understanding is being prepared for Leaders consideration, along with a joint Business Plan. The intention is that these will be agreed by Leaders before the 31st July and formally launched in September 2021. Homes England remain committed to provide capacity funding for this programme for 2021/22 and the outputs of the joint work on the Business Plan will also feed into the Spending Review in the Autumn. In addition to this activity, progress is also being made through joint working with regional housing associations, through a new initiative to create greater opportunities for small and medium sized builders.

5.2 These programmes combine to provide strategic place shaping and delivery on a regional scale that is not possible by any organisation or agency acting alone or in sub partnerships. There is now a clear requirement for governance arrangements to oversee these programmes, to provide transparency over decision making, to demonstrate to investors that South Essex is "investor ready", and provide the accountability arrangements for investment received. South Essex Leaders have agreed that the most appropriate form of governance in this respect would be a Joint Committee.

6. An ASELA Joint Committee

6.1 What is a Joint Committee?

6.1.1 At the ASELA Leaders meeting on 10 December 2020, it was agreed that work would be undertaken to seek approval from ASELA Councils to move towards a joint committee arrangement. **Appendix 1** is a paper agreed by ASLEA Leaders on 21 January 2021, to be considered by all ASELA councils. The paper recommends a joint committee model in order to provide appropriate overview, scrutiny and co-opted membership and allow ASELA to deliver its ambitious growth programme.

- 6.1.2 A joint committee formalises the business of an Association and would be established in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. Joint committees set the strategic and policy direction as well as commission and co-ordinate the delivery of projects and programmes.
- 6.1.3 Joint committees have been established between local authorities for various purposes, including:
- To provide a forum for local authorities to collaborate on and co-ordinate plans affecting a particular area/region.
 - To direct shared services arrangements, whether for front line functions, such as waste collection and disposal, or back office services, such as finance, HR and IT services, including joint procurement.
 - To manage parks extending across local authority boundaries, crematoria, and museums and other cultural or recreational attractions.
- 6.1.4 Joint committees are a common and favoured feature amongst councils because they provide a transparent and accountable means to achieving combined goals whilst ensuring the individual sovereignty of each body remains. Joint committees do not become involved in the daily business of councils outside of the purposes for which it was established. There would, therefore, be **no transfer of powers currently held by any constituent authority to the joint committee**. It would also mean that no decision could be taken by the joint committee which relates to any matter that is in the preserve of a specific constituent authority, unless that authority indicates its agreement with the proposal.
- 6.1.5 An example of a joint committee is the South Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee which was formed by the collaboration of seven councils in Essex and manages the South Essex Parking Partnership. A further example is The Five Councils Partnership Corporate Services Joint Committee which is a partnership between Mendip District Council, South Oxfordshire DC, Vale of Horse DC, Hart DC and Havant Borough Council. The joint committee enables all five councils to share services relating to Revenues & Benefits, Local Land Charges, Customer Services, IT and Procurement.

6.2 Why is a Joint Committee right for ASELA?

- 6.2.1 The current governance arrangement is based upon a collaborative Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), agreed by all Councils in January 2018, which recognised that decision making and accountability arrangements for ASELA would need to be regularly reviewed to ensure it remained fit for purpose.
- 6.2.2 In response to progress of the programme of work into the delivery stage, it is now an appropriate time to review the current arrangement. With the imminent requirement to manage large sums of government and private sector investment, there is a pressing need not only to demonstrate increased confidence in financial management but also to validate a combined commitment to the governance and operational delivery of the programme. A more formal, accountable, and transparent governance arrangement would also support:
- enhanced openness and accountability to constituent authorities;

- providing greater local control over direct investment and related financial considerations e.g. section 106 planning agreements between councils and developers;
- a signal to private investors, especially long term investors, that ASELA is capable and committed; and
- a signal to government departments and investors that ASELA is financially sustainable, and a trusted and reliable delivery partner.

- 6.2.3 In addition to oversight of the growth delivery programme a joint committee provides:
- Management and oversight of expenditure and activity associated with funding received from Government and other sources.
 - Agree the level of financial contributions to be sought from each local authority to support the work of ASELA.
 - Ensure effective relationships and collaboration as necessary to achieve ASELA's vision, with central Government and other regional and national bodies including the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

6.3 Practicalities of the ASELA Joint Committee

The proposal for an ASELA Joint Committee would include the following features:

- Eight members and co-opted members are anticipated: Basildon; Brentwood; Castle Point; Essex County Council; Rochford; Southend, Thurrock; and The Federated Board of the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Each Council will appoint a member.
- A Chair and Vice-Chair will be appointed.
- Matters will be decided through voting (co-opted members can speak but not vote) and decisions reached through majority.
- No decision can be taken by the Joint Committee which relates to any matter that is in the preserve of a specific constituent authority unless that authority indicates its agreement with the proposal. Thereby maintaining the principle of subsidiarity.
- One authority will act as an 'accountable body' in relation to the functions and resources of ASELA shall be agreed by the Joint Committee.
- A local authority will be designated to provide secretariat to the joint committee (Southend BC currently fulfils this role).
- It is the advice of Monitoring Officers for scrutiny to take place at each existing partner councils' Overview & Scrutiny process as the most efficient and effective arrangement at the present time. For Southend BC this would involve Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee and the ASELA Working Party. However, arrangements should be kept under review.

7. Other Options

- 7.1 Do nothing – this option is not recommended. Continuing with the existing informal arrangements does not support ASELA's ability to secure large scale investment from Government and the private sector. Nor does it provide transparency of decision making or accountability for delivery.
- 7.2 If a Council determines that it does not want to join the joint committee, it is proposed that it can become a co-opted member. Councils that are co-opted members of the Committee will be able to speak on all matters in front of the Committee but will not have a vote. If a Council is not a member of a joint committee it will have not agreed to

jointly discharge their functions with the other members of the committee and in essence the Joint Committee would not cover that Council area.

- 7.3 The recommendation, therefore, is that each ASELA Council should use its powers and agree to become members of the joint committee. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the council to develop proposals that provide the best possible outcome for Southend's residents while satisfying Government requirements.

8. Reasons for Recommendations

- 8.1 To provide ASELA with the governance arrangements required to enable delivery of the Growth and Recovery Prospectus and ten delivery programmes and for Southend and its residents to be a direct and indirect beneficiary of the work.

9. Corporate Implications

9.1 Contribution to the Southend 2050 ambition, outcomes and road map and Transforming Together

The ASELA delivery work programme refers to the economic agenda for the South Essex region, how it can deliver new jobs, new transport infrastructure, new homes, and the future governance arrangements to deliver better outcomes for its existing, and new, residents and businesses. These all contribute in a significant way to various aspects of the Southend 2050 Road Map, particularly the objectives in Opportunity & Prosperity and Connected & Smart. As mentioned in section 4.1.5 there are specific benefits to Southend and its residents of the ASELA programme.

9.2 Financial and value for money implications

Resources for specialist advice will be obtained from within existing budgets. Neighbouring councils are also expected to make a financial commitment to this work.

9.3 Legal Implications –

Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 will be enacted in order to establish a Joint Committee. A draft constitution has been set out in Appendix 1 that recognises each Council's sovereign entity.

9.4 Equalities and diversity Implications – None specific at this time

9.5 Other corporate implications – - None at this time

People
Property
Empowerment, Co-design/production and Consultation
Risk
Community Safety
Green City/Environment/Climate Change
Data Protection
ICT
Health
Health & Safety

10. Background Papers –

- ASELA Growth & Recovery Prospectus – July 2020
- ASELA Memorandum of Understanding – January 2018
- ASELA report to Cabinet July 2020
- ASELA report on examples of governance models, January 2021

11. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Report from the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA)
Good Governance and Accountability – Proposals for Establishment of a Formal Joint
Committee

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**Report from the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA)
Good Governance and Accountability – Proposals for Establishment of a Formal
Joint Committee**

Introduction

- 1.0 The purpose of this report is to set out proposals for the future governance arrangements for the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) and to seek agreement of constituent authorities to now form a Statutory Joint Committee.
- 1.1 The ASELA Board is currently operating to provide growth and strategic place leadership across the whole of the South Essex region and comprises the local authorities of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend and Thurrock. Its governance is based on a collaborative Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was agreed by all Councils in January 2018. The MOU recognises that the decision making and accountability arrangements for ASELA will need regular review to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
- 1.2 South Essex has received an initial tranche of funding from Government, and is currently in negotiation with Government and the Private Sector for new investment to support economic growth. This will require a formal governance model to provide accountability to investors and good governance and transparency in the local management and use of any funds received.
- 1.3 In addition, the ASELA Board has served and is likely to continue to need to provide the aligned functions of:
 - a. Strategic direction, monitoring, delivery and co-ordination of current and future Growth strategy, programmes and implementation of any Growth funding
 - b. Governance body that secures strategic collaboration and delivery across the councils and with the federated body of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on place, economic performance and infrastructure matters
 - c. Acts as the place leadership body for South Essex that provides a single voice to Government, also identifies, promotes, lobbies for South Essex's interests and for funding
 - d. Oversight, accountability for and prioritisation of any South Essex investment fund

Recommendations

1. **That constituent local authorities formally agree to become a members of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) Joint Committee in accordance with governing documents set out in Appendix 1, and**
2. **Appoint the Leader of the Council as their representative on the Joint Committee, and a substitute member as set out in the governing documents.**

Background

The ASELA Board and its current programmes

2.0 The ASELA Partners have invested significant capital in the work that has been undertaken on the Growth programmes so far, through the dedication of political, officer and financial resources. The arrangements are tailored to meet the collective requirements of South Essex and the progress that it has made is important. The programmes that have been developed and the outcomes that are being sought in place and economic terms will deliver significant benefits to South Essex residents and businesses.

2.1 Since the submission of the ASELA Growth and Recovery Prospectus there has been substantial progress in delivering the core programmes as set out in the report from ASELA to constituent authorities in December 2020, and especially in certain programmes. This includes:

- Creative Industries – work has been commissioned to produce a sector designed set of investable infrastructure projects that will focus on key creative clusters across South Essex and the specific maker space and skills support needed to enable them to flourish;
- New Generation University – a specialist team have been appointed to develop a feasibility study, which will report to ASELA Leaders in March 21; working to a plan to have the first graduate apprenticeships commence in September 2023;
- Digital Network – roll out of the local full fibre network remains on track and work with the Thames Estuary Growth Board on a single network and data centres/services is due to be launched;
- Infrastructure and Housing – as well as the pipeline of shovel ready schemes, strategic engagement with Housing Associations is underway, and a summit meeting with Small Medium Sized Enterprises took place in January;
- South Essex Estuary Park – an award winner of blue and green infrastructure design, and work is now pressing ahead to build the detailed master planning and infrastructure investment proposals needed to deliver a pathfinder implementation project across the Central Thames Marshlands area;
- Stimulating Economic Recovery – the Economic Recovery Taskforce with Opportunity South Essex has been established for over two months: additional resources have been made available to support the Growth Hubs, which has seen unprecedented demand; and there is a clear action plan in place to support jobs.

There have also been a number of discussions with investors and Homes England have now confirmed £265k capacity funding for 2020/21 to support work on infrastructure and housing. It is clear, that if South Essex is to secure the level of investment that is required to achieve its full potential, the area needs to represent its collective scale; a pipeline of projects that deliver long term returns; unity and joint commitment.

2.2 The ASELA Board is focused solely on economic growth and recovery activity that can only be achieved collectively and on programmes that cross local authority boundaries. It is not concerned with any matter that it is the preserve of a constituent council. Its focus also keeps it separate from other questions about the future delivery of public services in South Essex.

Establishing a formal model of Governance for ASELA

3.0 ASELA recognised in its report to constituent local authorities in July 2020 the importance of ensuring that its governance and operational arrangements are fit for purpose. The Association committed to bring forward proposals for more formal interim governance arrangements for ASELA which this report now does.

3.1 There are several benefits for moving to a new model of decision making and accountability. These include:

- enhanced openness and accountability to constituent authorities; the joint committee will operate in accordance with the same legislative provisions as other local authority committees.
- providing a more formal governance model to provide accountability to Government and Private Sector investors;
- providing greater local control over direct investment and related financial considerations e.g. s106
- good governance and transparency in the local management and use of any funds received; and
- giving unity and joint commitment to ASELA and delivery of the programme developed.

3.1 Continuing with the existing informal governance arrangements does not support securing large scale investment from Government and the Private sector. Nor does it provide transparency of decision making or accountability for delivery. The recommendation therefore, is that each ASELA Council should use its powers and agree to form part of a Joint Committee.

The main features of an ASELA Joint Committee

4.0 Proposed governing documents for the joint committee which each constituent authority is asked to adopt is set out in Appendix 1.

4.1 A summary of the main features is set out below:

- The Joint Committee of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities will be formally established in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Joint Committee will comprise those authorities who formally agree to being a member and become effective from ...TBC.
- Each Council will have a seat at the Committee and appoint a member to the joint committee who shall have voting rights – it is intended that this will be the Leader of the Council. Another elected member will as a substitute member to act in the absence of the member appointed.

- A Chair and Vice-Chair shall be appointed at the first meeting of the Joint Committee. Appointment of a new Chair and Vice-Chair shall take place by the end of June each year, following the annual meetings of all constituent councils. The Chair or, in his or her absence, the Vice-Chair shall chair all meetings of the joint committee when present. No business of the joint committee shall be transacted unless at least half of constituent council Members or substitute members appointed are present.
- Any matters that are to be decided by the joint committee will be decided by a majority of the members present and voting on that question. Such a majority will include substitute members, acting in place of members.
- Each member, or a substitute member acting in that member's place, will have one vote and no member or substitute member is to have a casting vote. If a vote is tied on any matter it shall be deemed not to have been carried.
- No decision can be taken by the Joint Committee which relates to any matter that is in the preserve of a specific constituent authority unless that authority indicates its agreement with the proposal. Thereby maintaining the principle of subsidiarity
- An 'accountable body' in relation to the functions and resources of ASELA shall be agreed by the Joint Committee
- A local authority will be designated to provide secretariat to the joint committee
- Principals of good governance require that there should be some form of scrutiny of the decision-making process within the Joint Committee. It is considered that the most efficient and effective arrangement at the present time, would be for this to be provided for via each of the partner councils' individual Overview & Scrutiny process.
- The governing documents and arrangements set out therein shall be subject to review by the joint committee on an annual basis.

- 4.1 If a Council determines that it does not want to join the joint committee, it is proposed that it may become a co-opted member. Councils that are co-opted members of the joint committee will be able to speak on all matters in front of the committee, but will not have a vote. If a Council is not a member of a joint committee and it will have not agreed to jointly discharge their functions with the other members of the committee, then the joint committee would not cover that Council area.
- 4.2 The joint committee shall have the ability to appoint other appropriate co-opted members who would not have voting rights. It is anticipated that this is likely to include The Federated Board of the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Thames Estuary Growth Board.

Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA)
Joint Committee Agreement and Constitution

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The core purpose of the Joint Committee is to provide place leadership for South Essex. Recognising that through a collaborative approach, the constituent authorities will be best placed to develop and deliver a vision for South Essex up to 2050, promoting healthy growth for communities.
- 1.2 The Joint Committee will focus on the strategic opportunities, regardless of individual local authority boundaries for the South Essex economic corridor to influence and secure the strategic infrastructure that will help individual areas to flourish and realise their full economic and social potential.
- 1.3 This agreement sets out how the ASELA Joint Committee shall operate in seeking to deliver its overarching purpose, what powers and functions it holds, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that it operates efficiently, effectively and is both transparent and accountable.
- 1.4 The Joint Committee shall come into effect from ...TBC.
- 1.5 The Association shall operate and discharge its functions through a Joint Committee between all local authorities formally established in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and who have agreed to form part of the Joint Committee and made the agreed financial contribution to support the work of the joint committee. It has * members, being
 - a councillor (elected member) appointed by each of the 'Constituent Councils' which includes -
 - o *

(to be updated to reflect the authorities who have agreed to form the joint committee)
- 1.6 The Joint Committee shall have the ability to agree to additional local authorities, who it is considered are able to contribute to the aims of the Joint Committee, to join the committee as a 'constituent council'. Any such authorities will need to have formally agreed, in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to form part of the Joint Committee and made the agreed financial contribution to support the work of the Joint Committee.
- 1.7 The Joint Committee is subject to overview and scrutiny through constituent authorities' own scrutiny arrangements.

2. Principles

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

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTIONS

A. JOINT COMMITTEE

1. Overview

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

2. Membership

2.1 Appointment.

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

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

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

2.2 Term of Membership

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

- (d) Where a constituent council exercises its power under subparagraph (c), it must give written notice of the new appointment and the termination of the previous appointment to the Association's Secretariat and the new appointment shall take effect and the previous appointment terminate with immediate effect.

2.3 **Chair** – A Chair and Vice-Chair shall be appointed at the first meeting of the joint committee. Appointment of a new Chair and Vice-Chair shall take place by the end of June each year, following the annual meetings of all constituent councils. The Chair or, in his or her absence, the Vice-Chair shall chair all meetings of the joint committee when present.

2.4 **Quorum.** No business of the joint committee shall be transacted unless at least half of the Constituent Council Members or substitute members appointed are present.

3. **Meetings and Procedure**

3.1 **Voting**

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

3.2 **Procedure**

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

4. Sub-Committees and advisory bodies

4.1 The joint committee -

- (a) may establish such other sub-committees, which may include the co-option of any non-voting members, as it sees fit; and
- (b) may establish such advisory panels and ad-hoc working groups as it considers may be expedient to assist it.

5. Delegation

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

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

A record of such delegations shall be maintained

6. Core Purpose, Aims and Functions

Core Purpose and aims

6.1 The core purpose of the Joint Committee is to provide place leadership for South Essex. Recognising that through a collaborative approach, the constituent authorities will be best placed to develop and deliver a vision for South Essex up to 2050, promoting healthy growth for communities.

6.2 The Joint Committee will focus on the strategic opportunities, regardless of individual local authority boundaries for the South Essex economic corridor to influence and secure the strategic infrastructure that will help individual areas to flourish and realise their full economic and social potential.

6.3 The primary aims of Joint Committee will be to:

- Provide place leadership;
- Open up spaces for housing, business and leisure development by developing a spatial strategy;
- Transform transport connectivity;
- Support the sectors of industrial opportunity;
- Shape local labour & skill markets;
- Create a fully digitally-enabled place;
- Secure a sustainable energy supply;
- Influence and secure funding for necessary strategic infrastructure; and
- Work with and provide a voice for South Essex working with the Thames Estuary Growth Board.

Principles of collaboration

6.4 Collaboration will be focused on three key areas:

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

Specific Functions

6.5 The functions of the joint committee are as follows:

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

MEETINGS STANDING ORDERS

1. Interpretation, Suspension and Chair's Ruling

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

2. Revisions to Standing Orders

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

3. Chairing of Meetings

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

4. Meetings

- 4.1 The Annual Meeting of the joint committee shall be held annually in June on a date and at a time following the annual meetings of all 'Constituent Councils'
- 4.2 Ordinary meetings of committee for the transaction of general business shall be held on such dates and at such times as the committee shall determine.
- 4.3 All meetings of the committee shall be open to the public (including the press) except to the extent that they are excluded whether during the whole or part of the proceedings either:
 - (a) In accordance with Section 100A(2) of the Local Government Act 1972; or

- (b) By resolution passed to exclude the public on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. Any such Resolution shall identify the proceedings or the part of the proceedings to which it applies and state the description, in terms of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 of the exempt information giving rise to the exclusion of the public.

5. Notice of Meetings

- 5.1 At least five clear working days before a meeting of a committee:
 - (a) notice of the time and place of the intended meeting shall be published;
 - (b) a summons to attend the meeting, specifying an agenda for the meeting, shall be sent to all Members of the joint committee by electronic mail.
- 5.2 Lack of service on a member of the committee of the summons shall not affect the validity of a meeting of the committee.
- 5.3 Each constituent authority shall ensure a link from their own website to information regarding meetings of ASELA and copies of agendas and minutes.

6. Meeting Agendas

- 6.1 The Chair of the Joint Committee will decide upon the agenda for the meetings. The Chair may put on the agenda of any meeting any matter which the Chair wishes.
- 6.2 Any Member of the committee may require that an item is placed on the agenda of the next available meeting of the committee for consideration.
- 6.3 Any item proposed to be included on the agenda for any meeting of the committee in accordance with sub-paragraph 6.2 above, which is not submitted in writing before 7 working days of the meeting, shall not be included on the agenda for that meeting unless it is agreed by the Chair. In this case the amended agenda for the meeting will state the reason for the late acceptance of any such item.

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

7. Access to Information

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

8. Quorum

- 8.1 No business shall be transacted at any meeting of a committee unless at least half of the Members or substitute members appointed by the constituent councils are present.
- 8.2 If at the time for which a meeting is called, and for 15 minutes thereafter, a quorum is not present, then no meeting shall take place.
- 8.3 If during any meeting of the committee the Chair, after counting the number of Members present, declares that there is not a quorum present, the meeting shall stand adjourned to a time fixed by the Chair. If there is no quorum and the Chair does not fix a time for the reconvened meeting, the meeting shall stand adjourned to the next ordinary meeting of the committee.

9. Order of Business

- 9.1 At every meeting of the committee the order of business shall be to select a person to preside if the Chair or Vice-Chair are absent and thereafter shall be in accordance with the order specified in the agenda for the meeting, except that such order may be varied -
- (a) by the Chair at his/her discretion; or
 - (b) on a request agreed by the committee
- 9.2 The Chair may bring before the committee at their discretion any matter that they consider appropriate to bring before the committee as a matter of urgency.

10. Standing Orders of Debate

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

11. Voting

- 11.1 Subject to sub-paragraph 11.6, any matters that are to be decided by the committee are to be decided by a majority of the members present and voting on that matter at a meeting of the committee, such majority to include substitute members, acting in place of members.
- 11.2 Each member appointed according to the provisions in paragraph 1, or a substitute member acting in that member's place, and the Chair, or the Vice-Chair acting in his or her place is to have one vote and no member or substitute member is to have a casting vote.
- 11.3 If a vote is tied on any matter it shall be deemed not to have been carried.
- 11.4 Whenever a vote is taken at meetings it shall be by a show of hands. On the requisition of any member, supported by one other Member who signifies their support, and before the vote is taken, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each Member present gave their vote for or against that question or abstained from voting.
- 11.5 A Member, or Substitute Member acting in that Member's place may demand that his/her vote be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.
- 11.6 A decision on a question relating to a matter that is in the preserve of a specific local authority shall require the support and agreement of that specific authority.

12. Conduct

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

10. Disturbance by Members of the Public

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

11. Notification and Declaration of Interests

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

Public Document Pack
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of ASELA & Local Government Reform Working Party

Date: Monday, 7th June, 2021
Place: Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

17

Present: Councillor I Gilbert (Chairman)
Councillors J Courtenay*, D Cowan, M Davidson, D McGlone,
A Moring, C Mulroney and I Shead

*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

In Attendance: S Brown, S Dolling, G Halksworth, T MacGregor, M Sheppard,
S Tautz and J Williams

Start/End Time: 6.00 pm - 6.20 pm

1 Apologies for Absence & Substitutions

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor T Cox (substitute Councillor J Courtenay).

2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made by members of the Working Party.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2021

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Working Party held on 11 February 2021 be received and confirmed as a correct record.

4 Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) - Anchor Programmes

The Leader of the Council advised the Working Party of progress with regard to the delivery of each of the anchor programmes within the ASELA Growth and Recovery Prospectus agreed in July 2020 and the current position with regard to the achievement of specific objectives for each programme, on which ASELA was enhancing its focus during 2021.

Resolved:

That progress against the anchor programmes and the current position with regard to the objectives within each programme, be noted.

5 Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) - Governance Arrangements

The Working Party considered a draft report to be made to the next meeting of the Cabinet, with regard to the adoption of appropriate governance arrangements for ASELA, to provide transparency and accountability around its strategic and policy direction and the delivery of the programmes within the Growth and Recovery Prospectus.

The Leader of the Council advised the Working Party that the joint committee arrangement favoured by the leaders of the ASELA councils was a common feature amongst local authorities to provide transparent and accountable means to the achievement of combined objectives, whilst also maintaining the individual sovereignty of each authority.

The Leader of the Council reminded the Working Party that the establishment of a joint committee would not result in the transfer of any powers currently held by the Council, but that such joint arrangement would support ASELA in the management of government and private sector investment and in demonstrating its status as an effective partner in the delivery of the transformation programme. At the request of the Working Party, the Leader undertook to seek consideration by ASELA of the inclusion of an appropriate provision for the maximum continuous tenure of the position of Chair of the proposed joint committee by any of the constituent authorities, within the constitution of the joint committee.

Resolved:

- (1) That the current position with regard to the development of appropriate governance arrangements for ASELA, be noted.
- (2) That the recommendations to be made to the next meeting of the Cabinet with regard to the adoption of appropriate governance arrangements for ASELA and the proposed membership of the Council in a joint committee arrangement, be supported by the Working Party.

Chair: _____

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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Public Protection Working Party

Date: Tuesday, 8th June, 2021
Place: Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

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Present: Councillor M Terry (Chair)
Councillors M Berry, K Buck*, M Dent, J Warren and P Wexham

*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

In Attendance: E Butler, L Harper and S Tautz

Start/End Time: 6.00 pm - 6.40 pm

1 Apologies for Absence & Substitutions

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor D Garston (substitute Councillor K Buck) and Councillor D Nelson (no substitute).

2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made by members of the Working Party.

3 Notice of Motion - Death Certificate Compassionate Fund

The Working Party considered a report of the Executive Director (Transformation) in response to a Notice of Motion referred by the Council at its meeting on 4 March 2021, concerning the establishment of a Death Certificate Compassionate Fund to cover the cost of replacement death certificates.

The Working Party was advised that the Coronavirus Act 2020 had introduced a temporary change in the law from March 2020 that provided for death registration to be completed by telephone to comply with the social distancing requirements of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside arrangements for the issue of death certificates by postal services. Members noted that some postal services attracted an additional cost to the statutory fee (£11.00) for the issue of each death certificate set by the General Register Office and that the Council was unable to refund the cost of certificates that were lost in the postal system or for which receipt was delayed as a result of the impact of the pandemic, or to waive the fee for the issue of replacement certificates in such circumstances.

Councillors asked a number of questions in relation to current arrangements for the registration of a death and the issue of death certificates, which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Notice of Motion seeking the establishment of a Death Certificate Compassionate Fund, be noted.

- (2) That the Cabinet be recommended to initiate the establishment of an appropriate Death Certificate Compassionate Fund.
- (3) That the Cabinet be recommended that support arising from the proposed Death Certificate Compassionate Fund only be available to applicants in receipt of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction, or otherwise at the discretion of the Council's Registrars on a case-by-case basis.
- (4) That, in considering the detail and application criteria of the proposed Death Certificate Compassionate Fund, the Cabinet also receive full details of the estimated cost and financial implications of the operation of the Fund.

Chair: _____

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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Environment, Culture, Tourism & Planning Working Party

Date: Tuesday, 8th June, 2021

Place: MS Teams

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Present: Councillor C Mulroney (Chair)
Councillors A Bright, D Garston, S George, D Jarvis, K Mitchell,
D Nelson and S Wakefield

In Attendance: Councillor P Wexham
R Harris, R Dawson, T Saunders, M Sheppard, C Victory and A
Smith.

Start/End Time: 6.00 - 7.45 pm

1 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence at this meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

3 Southend New Local Plan

The Working Party considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (Growth and Housing) which will be considered at the Cabinet on 15th June 2021 seeking approval to publish the 'Refining the Plan Options' for public consultation as part of the next stage in preparing the Southend New Local Plan.

The Working Party asked a number of questions which were responded to by officers.

During consideration of the report the Working Party considered a proposal from Councillor Bright and seconded by Councillor Nelson to make an additional recommendation to Cabinet concerning the protection of Green Belt land from inappropriate development. The proposal was not carried.

Resolved:

That the recommendations contained in paragraph 2.1 to 2.3 of the report to Cabinet on 15th June 2021, be endorsed.

Chair: _____

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