

# Public Document Pack



## Agenda Supplement

Dear Councillor

### **ORDINARY COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2015**

I am now able to enclose, for consideration on Wednesday, 16th September, 2015 meeting of the Ordinary Council, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

<b>Agenda No</b>	<b>Item</b>
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- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 9.  | <b><u>Peer Review Update</u> (Pages 3 - 10)</b>         |
| 10. | <b><u>Essex Devolution - Update</u> (Pages 11 - 20)</b> |

Yours sincerely

Head of Paid Service  
Encs

09/09/15

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**16 September 2015**

**Ordinary Council**

**Peer Review – Action Plan Status**

**Report of:** *Phil Ruck, Head of Paid Service*

**Wards Affected:** *All*

**This report is:** *Public*

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Brentwood Borough Council invited the local Government Association to conduct a follow up Peer review in November 2013.
- 1.2 The full details of the report of the Peer Review team were detailed in a report to Council 7 April 2014. The purpose of this report is to advise of the current status of the action plan contained within that report.

## **2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That progress of the action plan (attached as Appendix A) be monitored by the Audit, Scrutiny and Transformation committee over the next 18 months.**
- 2.2 To agree that a full transformation agenda be prepared by the Head of Paid Service and be presented to the November Policy, Finance and Resources committee for approval then monitored by the Audit, Scrutiny and Transformation committee.**

## **3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 Brentwood Borough Council invited the Local Government Association to conduct a follow up Peer Review in November 2013.
- 3.2 Peer reviews are conducted by experienced Member and Officer peers from across local government who are chosen to reflect the requirements and focus of the review.

#### **4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

4.1 The outcome letter of the November 2013 review highlighted a number of positive areas since the last peer review in 2011:

- i. Major projects have been advanced.
- ii. Finances are much improved, with a clean bill of health for the accounts and less dependency on reserves in setting the revenue budget.
- iii. Efficiency savings have been delivered.
- iv. Our staff are loyal and committed.

4.2 However there were a number of areas of concern that the Council needs to address in order to meet the challenge of delivering on our commitment to change:

- a) Poor ethical behaviour
- b) The organisation needs to display respect for each individual and demonstrate that values are being upheld throughout the organisation. Develop constructive relationships between Officers and Members and CLB  
Disproportionate amount of time spent on Member issues;  
Officers need to be released to focus on the needs of the business rather than day to day involvement in governance issues.
- c) CLB need to act as a single team with a strategic focus

4.3 An action plan was developed to address many of the issues raised and is attached (Appendix A)

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

5.1 The Peer Review action plan has been implemented where actions could be completed. However many of the actions are such that they need regular review/attention.

5.2 The on-going work should be monitored as part of the Council's Transformation agenda by the Audit, Scrutiny and Transformation committee.

## **6. References to Corporate Plan**

- 6.1 The action plan assesses the impact of and effectiveness of the Council to deliver its commitments as a whole

## **7. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

**Name & Title: Chris Leslie, Finance Director**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312 542 christopher.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk**

- 7.1 None directly arising from the report.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Chris Potter, Monitoring Officer**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312 860 christopher.potter@brentwood.gov.uk**

- 7.2 None directly arising from the report.

**Other Implications** (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

- 7.3 None

## **8. Appendices to this report**

- Appendix A – the Peer Review Action Plan

### **Report Author Contact Details:**

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# Appendix A - ACTION PLAN

<b>TITLE: PEER REVIEW</b> <b>LEAD OFFICER: Philip Ruck</b>	<b>PROGRESS UPDATE:</b>		25/08/15	V4.0
	<b>R</b>	Target date likely to be missed. Caution		
	<b>A</b>	On target to meet completion date. Monitor		
	<b>G</b>	Action completed.		

This action plan has been developed from the findings of the peer review 2013 and supports the Council's People and Organisational Development Strategy. Each action can be linked to one or more of the following themes:

**A - Leadership, Management & Vision**

\* inspirational leadership, strong and consistent management and clear vision.

**B - People Matter**

\*creating a learning / training environment for employees and Members, offering appropriate career progression and opportunities for personal development, welcoming diversity and new ideas, and providing opportunities for these to be brought forward.

**C - Workforce / Capacity Planning**

\* recognising the diverse needs of our workforce and planning for staff movement (secondment, retirement, flexible working requests, turnover). Where appropriate, working with a range of partners and key agencies who are central to the improvement and growth of the borough. Influencing decisions that make a difference to our communities.

**D - Culture**

\* Developing and practising the values and behaviours that we need to achieve our vision. Being a role model to communities and enhancing our reputation.

**E - Communication**

\* keeping good communication at the heart of everything we do, recognising that it is pivotal to our image and reputation both internally (with staff and Members), and externally (with customers, partners, media, stakeholders) and acknowledging that everyone has responsibility in achieving this.

<b>START DATE:</b>	01/APR/2014	<b>FINISH DATE:</b>	31/DEC/2015	<b>NO. WEEKS</b>	88
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REF	TASK DESCRIPTION	RAG	TARGET FINISH DATE	Completed	LINK TO ADDITIONAL OD PRIORITIES	RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS UPDATE
<b>A – Leadership, Management &amp; Vision</b>							
PR1	Establish regular meetings between Statutory Officers and Group Leaders as part of the annual cycle of meetings.	G	11/06/2014	YES	D	Corporate & Democratic Services Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly meetings in place for Group Leaders;</li> <li>Fortnightly meetings with the Leader of the Opposition;</li> <li>Daily/Weekly meetings with the Leader of the Council.1</li> </ul>

PR2	Agree and establish with opposition group leaders a system of engagement that meets theirs and the organisation's needs, reducing the need for members' requests and other requests for information.	G	31/05/2014	YES	C, D	HoPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fortnightly meetings with the Leader;</li> <li>Monthly meetings with Shadow Chairs.</li> </ul>
PR3	Develop a comprehensive training programme for Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing meetings</li> <li>Leading portfolio areas</li> <li>Role of lead members</li> </ul>	G	Agree programme: 30/06/2014 Delivery: 30/09/2014	YES	D	Corporate & Democratic Services Manager	Training course delivered on 31/6/2014 by Bevan Brittan (Olwen Dutton) and training resource available electronically for on-going use.
PR4	Develop a comprehensive training programme for members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Induction</li> <li>The Local Government arena</li> <li>Role of the ward member</li> <li>Role of committee members</li> <li>Role of officers and Statutory Officers</li> <li>Role of Administration</li> <li>Role of Opposition</li> <li>Codes of Conduct</li> </ul>	A	Induction agreed and implemented by 11/06/2014  Agree programme: 30/06/2014 Delivery: 30/09/2014	On - Going	D	Monitoring Officer	<p>Induction programme complete for new members (elected May 2014).</p> <p>Training programme devised in conjunction with Members and models delivered and on-going.</p> <p>Further member training programme launched from March 2015 for existing members</p> <p>Induction programme complete for new members (elected May 2015)</p>
PR5	Review all Member Working Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are they effective?</li> <li>Do they deliver clear outcomes?</li> <li>Do they deliver VFM?</li> </ul>	A	28/02/2015	On-Going	C	Monitoring Officer	Member working groups reviewed as part of the revision of the Constitution project with recommendation for training as to meaning, clear specification of terms of reference when set up.
<b>B - People Matter</b>							
PR6	Develop, agree and implement an organisational workforce strategy and talent management strategy that covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attracting and retaining staff</li> <li>Supporting staff into new roles (secondments etc)</li> </ul>	G	30/04/2014	On - Going	C, D	Head of Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy agreed by Finance &amp; Resources on 30 June 2014.</li> </ul>

PR7	Implement and invest in a Strategic Leadership Course for CLB and Middle Managers.	G	30/04/2014	YES	C, D	Head of Paid Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed – Strategic Leadership Course commenced on 23 July 2014 for 27 Senior and Middle Managers.</li> </ul>
<b>C - Workforce / Capacity Planning</b>							
PR8	Produce a refreshed Corporate Plan for 2016-2019 with a supporting delivery plan.	A	31/07/2015	No	A	CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work has commenced on drafting key themes for a refreshed Corporate Plan.</li> <li>Consultation on this has just concluded</li> </ul>
PR9	Produce a refreshed MTFP that goes beyond 2016 and is in line with the Corporate Plan.	G	31/03/2015	Yes	All	Finance Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A MTFP projected to 2017/18 was agreed by Council in March and revised in June 2015.</li> <li>A 5 year MTFP has also been developed to provide a longer term view.</li> </ul>
PR10	As part of the transformation work stream revisit the operational model as agreed in 2013 and ensure that it is fit for purpose beyond 2016.	A	31/03/2015	On - Going	A	Head of Business Transformation (Customer Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This will depend on the recruitment of the CE and any further restructuring plans that they may have.</li> </ul>
PR11	Introduce a comprehensive Programme and Performance Management framework that relies on relevant PIs and timely data intelligence, including benchmarking data and owned by CLB to better manage and inform the business.	G	30/04/2014	YES	D	Contract and Corporate Projects Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme/Project Management framework is in place and being used to monitor high level corporate projects and KPIs. This has been refreshed with the new priorities of the new Administration.</li> </ul>
PR12	Identify suitable local, county, regional and national partnerships that will add and which the organisation can learn from and commit to resourcing those partnerships.	A	30/06/2014	31/03/2015		CLB	Members of following Essex Groups – Pollution Control, Occupational Health & Safety, Private Sector Housing, Food Safety, Licensing, Community Safety Partnership, Essex Community Safety Network, Safer Essex, Brentwood Nightlife Action Group, Essex Regional Health & Safety Advisors Forum, South Stay Safe Group, District Safeguarding Leads, South West Children Partnerships Board,



							Brentwood Youth Strategy Group, Active Brentwood, Active Essex, Essex Chief Leisure Officers' Group, Essex Network of Arts Culture & Tourism, Brentwood Health & Wellbeing Board, Essex Health & Wellbeing Board. Essex Online Partnership, Essex Revenues & Benefits Managers' Group, Essex Communications Group. Essex Air Quality Consortium, Essex Contaminated Land Consortium.
PR13	Explore available technology that would facilitate the reduction of evening meetings (non-committee).	A	31/03/2015	On-Going	D	Monitoring Officer	Modern.Gov has been implemented making remote access to relevant papers easier. HoPS and MO met Modern.Gov new Customer Manager July 2015 to explore further options User Group meetings.. Next December 2015. ICT to be approached to see how links with current ICT projects (including new telephone system being rolled out) and potential for improved video conferencing.
<b>D - Culture</b>							
PR14	Develop agreed values to complement the Member/Officer Protocol and communicate this across the organisation ensuring officer and member sign up.	A	27/02/2015	On-Going	A	CE/Monitoring Officer	Developing within the revision of the Constitution project. Member/Officer Task and Finish Group underway.
PR15	Revise Protocol on Member/Staff relations, circulate to all Members and officers and ensure Members/Officers adhere to it.	A	30/06/2014	31/12/2014	A	Monitoring Officer	Developing within the revision of the Constitution project and (re) training on Nolan Principles and the Constitution once agreed to be rolled out. To include emphasis on media relations Cultural and behavioural change programme being considered.
PR16	Identify and develop champions for change who can role model positive behaviour and be catalysts within service areas.	G	30/06/2014	YES	B	Corporate Leadership Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved through the Corporate Brief and the Strategic Leadership Programme.</li> </ul>
<b>E - Communication</b>							

PR17	Deliver a comprehensive comms plan that is based on the Corporate Plan and uses key messages as a basis for all comms.	G	On-going	YES	D	Senior Comms Officer	A new Corporate Plan is currently being developed
PR18	Pro-actively focus on success stories both internally and externally.	G	On-going	YES	D	Senior Comms Officer	
PR19	Review communication channels and exchanges of written information between officers and members to enable the free flow of information to support Members in their role and to free up officers to run the business of the Council.	G	31/05/2014	YES	D, C	Monitoring Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As before on PR 1 &amp; 2.</li> <li>Agenda items are also designed to bring early policy ideas to allow input from Members.</li> </ul>

**16 September 2015**

**Ordinary Council**

**Greater Essex Devolution Update**

**Report of:** Philip Ruck- Head of Paid Service

**Wards Affected:** All

**This report is:** Public

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides a background to the discussions being held in relation to achieving greater economic growth across the Greater Essex area (comprising the twelve district/borough/city councils, Essex County Council and Southend and Thurrock unitary councils).

## **2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That the Council continues to participate in discussions with the Greater Essex area Councils;**
- 2.2 That a further contribution of £10,000 to support the devolution programme be agreed (to be met from the Organisational Transformation Reserve);**
- 2.3 That the Head of Paid Service and Leader of the Council be granted delegated authority (after first consulting with opposition Group Leaders) to sign off the submission to Government in October as the start of the negotiations, including developing an appropriate governance model. A full report of the outcome of those discussions with Government will come back to Full Council in due course.**

## **3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 The Council's current Corporate Plan (2013/16) set out the vision to create opportunity for the residents, communities and businesses in the Borough. At the heart of the Corporate Plan was recognition that the economic prosperity of the Borough is key for future success and that the

right mix of economic, environmental and social action would deliver improvements to the quality of life in the Borough. It recognised the need to support business to make sure the Borough lived up to its potential for employment and prosperity and that the regeneration programmes for the Borough benefitted local people.

- 3.2 The Corporate Plan also articulated the intention to work together with partners, local people and everyone who has a stake in the Borough area to create the environment where everyone can thrive.
- 3.3 As consideration is given to the next corporate plan, the focus on economic growth and prosperity is expected to be even greater.

#### **4. Devolution**

- 4.1 The Government in the Queen's Speech (27 May 2015) and Summer Budget (8 July 2015) outlined a number of measures to further promote economic growth, including the government's intention to extend local decision-making to towns and counties as well as large conurbations by way of devolution deals.
- 4.2 In anticipation of this continued direction of travel, which commenced under the previous coalition government, the Leaders and Chief Executives of local authorities in the Greater Essex area, comprising twelve district/borough/city councils, Essex County Council and Southend and Thurrock unitary councils, have held a number of workshops and discussions that seek to establish what opportunities the devolution of powers might present. The meetings have been held since November 2014.
- 4.3 On the 4<sup>th</sup> September, to meet the timetable set by government, the 15 Leaders of the Greater Essex local authorities submitted an expression of interest letter. A copy of this letter is included with this report. The letter only commits the Leaders at this stage to work with each other and with government to develop more specific devolution proposals. The letter states that the ambition is for Greater Essex to become the fastest growing UK economy outside London, which delivers the opportunity of a high quality standard of living for our residents, with increased and accelerated local and national dividends which are re-invested into world-class public services and infrastructure. More specifically it identifies that with the right devolution deal in place, including financial and regulatory freedoms and flexibilities, the Greater Essex authorities would work together to:

- bring productivity into line with comparable areas,
- accelerate economic growth,
- close the gap between current rates of house building and the level required to meet needs within our communities,
- improve skills levels to better meet the needs of business now and in the future,
- attract foreign investment,
- increase the resilience and robustness of Greater Essex to adapt to economic shocks and shifts in the future,
- and enable strategic planning and investment in infrastructure, including attracting more private sector investment.

4.4 It is anticipated that in October, a submission will be made to Government (including more details of the governance approach) to commence further in depth negotiations with Government; if this submission is made it will need the consideration and approval of individual authorities, which in terms of Brentwood will be done under delegated authority to the Head of Paid Service and Leader of the Council.

## **5. Combined Authorities**

5.1 Combined Authorities are recognised by central government as the preferred model for the devolution of powers, but there are other models available. Whilst work on the governance model for a Greater Essex devolution deal has not concluded yet, the following outlines the key attributes of a Combined Authority (CA):

- Allows for local authorities to work together on certain functions that can be more effectively delivered together
- CA's do not replace or merge existing councils
- CA is a new authority controlled by the democratically elected leaders of each member council based on one member one vote.
- They are legal bodies with powers of decision making granted by Parliament and Government
- They are one vehicle through which Government can pass down wider decision making powers and funding

5.2 It should be noted that if there is a proposal for a CA, the councils involved have to produce and agree a 'Scheme'; no council can be included in the proposal unless they have been party to discussions and each council must approve its membership of a CA before it can be formed. Greater Essex authorities are not at this stage yet.

- 5.3 Members may be aware that Southend and Thurrock unitary councils have indicated an early intention to form a CA but have now written to the Secretary of State indicating that a Greater Essex Combined Authority is their preferred model.

## **6. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 6.1 The only practical option is for BBC to continue to participate in discussions about potential future partnership arrangements. This will enhance the opportunities around economic growth and prosperity. It is clear that Government will not devolve further powers and funding to individual councils and therefore BBC should continue to discuss with the Greater Essex councils on a no risk basis, ensuring that Council is informed of progress.

## **7. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 7.1 Economic growth and prosperity which promotes inclusive growth for the benefit of all of the current and future residents of the Borough will continue to be the focus of the Council's policies and strategies for the remainder of the decade. The Government's approach to devolution to accelerate and assure delivery of economic growth, in principle, is entirely compatible with the Council's aspirations for the Borough. The detail of any specific devolution deal will be carefully evaluated to ensure that it is in the best interests of the residents and businesses within the Borough of Brentwood, including the governance model to support delivery. Discussions around the country are moving at a pace and it is important that Greater Essex maintain pace in exploring the opportunities in this agenda and it is essential that Brentwood Borough Council remains engaged in the debate and design of any potential deal. Such engagement does not commit the Council to any particular outcome but not being a party to the discussion could exclude the Council from later being a party to a combined authority 'scheme'.
- 7.2 Further reports will be provided to the Council, as appropriate, as the work progresses.
- 7.3 The Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill currently proceeding through Parliament will provide the statutory framework for one of the potential strategic collaboration models in the form of combined authorities.

7.4 Section 2 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out the process by which the Secretary of State may issue an invitation to the council to form a single tier of local government.

7.5 Discussions about opportunities to enhance economic growth are consistent with the Council's corporate plan to create opportunity.

## **8. References to Corporate Plan**

8.1 Discussions about opportunities to enhance economic growth are consistent with the Council's corporate plan to create opportunity

## **9. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

**Name & Title: Chris Leslie, Finance Director (Section 151)**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312 542 christopher.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk**

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. It should be noted that a contribution of £5,000 has been made by the Council to the Essex Chief Executives Association to support the cost of developing the discussions, workshops, etc. to date and a further contribution of £10,000 will be required in the near future. The funds will be drawn from the Organisational Transformation Reserve.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Saleem Chughtai , Governance Officer**

**Tel & Email: Saleem.Chughtai@BDTLegal.org.uk**

9.2 Combined authorities are a legal structure that may be set up by local authorities in England seeking a statutory order from the Government. The creation is voluntary and must have the support of the constituent authorities. Following consultation on a proposed statutory scheme and subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government the authority is established, amended and dissolved by statutory instrument.

9.3 The Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill had its third Reading in the House of Lords and First Reading in the House of Commons in July 2015. The Bill intends to allow the introduction of directly elected Mayors to Combined Authorities in England and allow the devolution of policing powers and local authority functions generally in addition to integrated transport and economic development. An enabling order may allow for functions to be exercised solely by the Combined Authority or concurrently.

**Other Implications** (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

9.4 None at this stage

**10. Background Papers** (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

10.1 None

**11. Appendices to this report**

11.1 Appendix A – Expression of Interest Letter

**Report Author Contact Details:**

**Name:** Philip Ruck, Head of Paid Service  
**Telephone:** 01277 312569  
**E-mail:** Philip.ruck@brentwood.gov.uk



## Appendix A

Nicola Beach,  
Chairman of Essex Chief Executives'  
Association,  
Chief Executive of Braintree DC  
c/o Braintree District Council,  
Causeway House, Braintree,  
ESSEX, CM7 9HB

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nicola.beach@braintree.gov.uk

4<sup>th</sup> September 2015

The Rt. Hon. George Osborne, MP,  
Chancellor of the Exchequer, HM Treasury  
And The Rt. Hon. Greg Clark, MP,  
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government,

By email

Dear Chancellor and Secretary of State,

### **Greater Essex Devolution – Submission Outline**

In March 2015 we wrote to the Rt. Hon Sir Eric Pickles MP registering our interest in developing a devolution deal for Greater Essex (covering the geographic county of Essex comprising the twelve Districts/Boroughs/City councils, the two Unitary councils of Southend and Thurrock and Essex County Council). Since that time, as the fifteen Leaders of these local authorities, we have been meeting regularly to shape an exciting new agenda for our communities, which we believe will provide long-term economic growth, increased productivity, provide greater certainty on housing delivery and world-class, financially sustainable public services. The Greater Essex area has been described as the most complex public service environment in the country. We recognise that challenge and we are now meeting with a renewed spirit of collaboration and partnership on a fortnightly basis to turn the high-level ambitions and proposals set out below into more detailed plans. We are already a major player in the Government's drive for economic prosperity and in ensuring our residents benefit from this. We would welcome continued engagement with you and your civil servants in the development of this next phase of the work, in time to contribute to the Spending Review.

### **Ambition**

Our ambition is for Greater Essex to become the fastest growing UK economy outside London that delivers the opportunity of a high quality standard of living for our residents, with increased and accelerated local and national dividends that are re-invested into world-class public services and infrastructure. We have a strong track record of delivery, for example enabling major port development and expansion at London Gateway and Port of Tilbury in Thurrock; the delivery of the South East's only City Deal and a £20m forward funding for road infrastructure; and a primary school that enabled a stalled housing site of 1,500 homes in N. Colchester to be developed. We have airports which have over 19m passengers a year and ports that provide the throughput for over 40m tonnes of goods. We are ranked third by the Stock Exchange, after London and Manchester, in having the most innovative companies, and in 2013 we saw 10,220 new business start-ups, justifying our reputation for entrepreneurialism.

However we also have untapped potential, where, with the right mechanisms, freedoms and flexibilities in place, we can:

- bring productivity into line with comparable areas;
- accelerate economic growth;

- close the gap between current rates of house building and the level required to meet needs within our communities;
- improve skills levels to better meet the needs of business now and in the future;
- attract foreign investment;
- increase the resilience and robustness of Greater Essex to adapt to economic shocks and shifts in the future;
- and enable strategic planning and investment in infrastructure, including attracting more private sector investment.

Underpinning our devolution approach is a new approach to investment, including attracting private sector investment. Our ambition is to become increasingly self-sufficient of government grant. Greater Essex people and businesses are already net contributors to the Exchequer and our proposals present a real opportunity to significantly increase that contribution. To stimulate increased growth and re-investment in infrastructure, homes, skills and public services we want to enter into a **gainshare agreement** under which the additional revenues generated through local growth would be shared between local and national partners.

We know that given the diverse nature of the Greater Essex economies, a centralised one-size fits all approach will not work. We need an approach which enables and supports our natural economic markets, whether they are rural, coastal, the Thames Gateway, commuter belt or part of the London-Cambridge corridor. That is why we are adopting a bespoke, pragmatic and powerful approach through our strategic growth areas, rather than the City region model which is more relevant in other parts of the country. This understanding will underpin our governance principles.

We believe that a devolution deal will be the spring-board to give us the freedoms, flexibilities and opportunities to deliver a step-change in outcomes, with benefits for the people and businesses of Greater Essex, London and neighbouring areas and, through our increased contribution to the Exchequer, to the wider country. Our ambition is that by 2025, with a devolution deal in place, we will have:

- The strongest economy outside London, increasing our economic output from £33.5bn to £60bn by supporting our economic growth areas to realise their full potential.
- A reputation as an internationally recognised and successful location for inward investment and have doubled the number of our businesses exporting from 7% to 14% in line with UKTI targets to double output by 2020.
- Outstanding connectivity, both transport and digital, that enables our businesses to grow and flourish and strengthens links between key transport hubs, including our airports and ports, with London and neighbouring areas.
- Further improved the rate and reliability of housing delivery to meet local housing plans, by promoting a targeted number of locally identified large-scale developments, including those on garden settlement principles, and utilising brownfield and public land. This will also provide opportunities for science and business parks and inward investment, and utilise SmartCity thinking to provide 'places' designed for healthy living and wellbeing. Due to Green Belt constraints a number of Greater Essex authorities have found it challenging to fulfil their Local Plan targets whilst others who are more ambitious for housing growth are held back by a lack of infrastructure, particularly roads. We seek to work with Government to bring forward schemes and approaches which can address housing need in Greater Essex with greater certainty, quality and pace and ensure that new businesses can locate to our excellent county.

- The most technically skilled workforce in the UK. We will increase by 20% the number of higher apprenticeships completed, focusing upon key growth sectors across the growth areas, such as advanced manufacturing and engineering, health and life sciences, low carbon and renewables, digital and creative industries and ports and logistics.
- Financially sustainable solutions that transform complex public services, focused on supporting sustainable communities, promoting economic wellbeing and healthy lifestyles
- Increased our net return to HMT and through gainshare models which we will be reinvesting in our growth areas and in public services across Greater Essex, to create a virtuous investment circle

## Governance

The local authorities of Greater Essex are exploring a combined authority model which captures the cumulative strength and advantage of Greater Essex, but which is based upon our natural economic areas and proposed growth area boards. These arrangements will strengthen the joint public and private sector leadership of growth and, in addition, will strengthen democratic accountability for delivery of our shared ambition and outcomes.

The principles we are developing assume a subsidiarity model where decisions are taken at the most effective level to deliver outcomes with the most impact at the most efficient cost. We see our growth area boards creating an opportunity for strategic localised decision-making and public service transformation through local leadership, shared services and collaboration. The Combined Authority, consisting of leaders of the fifteen authorities, will take decisions and commission activity where there are strategic benefits or gains from economies of scale. We are also exploring the appropriate devolution of powers by County, City, District & Borough councils to lower tier authorities and communities as part of our commitment to ensure all communities gain from the benefits of devolution.

We will ensure that any governance proposals are aligned to the current federated working model within SELEP and that strong business engagement is continued through bodies such as the Greater Essex Business Board, the Growth Partnership for South Essex and the Greater Essex Skills Board.

Our intention is to bring forward a timetable for a formal governance review to support our combined authority proposals.

## Next Steps

Our officers have had early discussions with your civil servants and would like to intensify these over the next few weeks, so that we can develop these ideas for the Spending Review. They will be writing to your civil servants with more detailed proposals to explore further. At the same time we will be intensifying our engagement with business leaders, wider public service partners and with our communities. We would also welcome the opportunity to explore some of these issues with you in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

Leaders of :





Cllr Phil Turner  
Basildon Council



Cllr Graham Butland  
Braintree District Council



Cllr Louise McKinlay  
Brentwood Borough Council



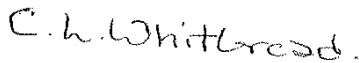
Cllr Colin Riley  
Castle Point Borough Council



Cllr Roy Whitehead  
Chelmsford City Council



Cllr Paul Smith  
Colchester Borough Council



Cllr Chris Whitbread  
Epping Forest District Council



Cllr David Finch  
Essex County Council



Cllr Jon Clempner  
Harlow Council



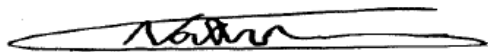
Cllr Miriam Lewis  
Maldon District Council



Cllr Terry Cutmore  
Rochford District Council



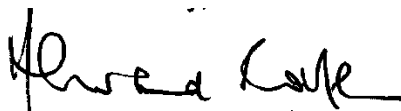
Cllr Ron Woodley  
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council



Cllr Neil Stock  
Tendring District Council



Cllr John Kent  
Thurrock Council



Cllr Howard Rolfe  
Uttlesford District Council