

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
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25th January 2018

South Essex 2050

We understand that you are considering what action you may take in relation to the local plan process of three authorities namely Brentwood, Basildon and Castlepoint in South Essex. To help inform your thinking, we are writing to you as the leaders of all the local authorities in South Essex setting out what we are doing to strengthen our collaboration across this economic and housing market corridor. We are working together to set out a new strategic approach to housing and planning which allows us collectively to deliver in full the homes and economic growth our area needs.

Local circumstances have made delivery of Local Plans in these three areas, challenging,, with all authorities having to consider the Metropolitan Green Belt restraints on development.

Recognising the need to deliver housing in a sustainable way that will create strong communities across the South of the county, we have come together to bring certainty to the adoption of local plans and most importantly are working to address the needs around new infrastructure that will support the much needed housing and economic development opportunities. Earlier this month we established the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA), which brings together all our authorities to progress our strategic long term ambitions for our region. Critically, in forming the Association we have agreed to work together collectively across district borders to seek to realise our full economic and social potential and plan on a joint basis for new infrastructure, homes and jobs.. A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding setting out our collective commitment to this work is attached.

We also attach to this letter a clear timetable for delivery of a joint infrastructure and spatial plan and the new Statement of Common Ground, which we have offered to pilot with your Ministry. This sets out our commitment that all of our local plans will be delivered in a joined up approach, with an emphasis on the provision of necessary infrastructure to support the expanding and new communities. Your department has previously discussed the importance of this and made reference to its relevance for new towns and new village and town developments, a position that we very much support.

Our focus is on ensuring the delivery of more than 90,000 homes over the next 20 years across South Essex in the shortest possible time with the necessary infrastructure. We recognise and accept that there will be some areas that will find full delivery of their plans more difficult than others. We are committed to working together to help address this and will co-operate across the region, recognising that the opportunities and challenges are not confined within single municipal boundaries.

Through ASELA we are committed to progress these matters collectively in the interests of South Essex as a whole, whilst respecting local priorities. The joint spatial plan will provide a strong framework to build on and deliver the sound individual local plans and provide the future strategic

context for them. Individual authorities are taking immediate steps to progress their local plans and those three authorities at risk of intervention have set out to you individual responses which we fully support. Additionally within South Essex we will use the joint strategic plan to set the future strategic context for our local plans as part of the national requirement for a 5 year review of housing needs in the region. This will deliver our ambition of creating growth for our communities across the region, as we seek to develop a strong and robust South Essex economy.

We have a tremendous opportunity to work together across South Essex as a whole to deliver in full the homes we need. We want to do so in close partnership with Government. We are concerned that formal intervention in any one of the three authorities could disrupt the collective political progress we are making and would not make any faster progress towards getting sound local plans in place, slowing delivery of new homes.

Our plans are ambitious and we are keen to work in partnership with your Ministry to put in place the proposed framework. We intend to provide quarterly updates on the progress we are making in our shared objective of delivering new homes and communities with South Essex.

Signed

Leaders of

Thurrock,

Brentwood,

Basildon,

Castle Point,

Rochford

Southend and

ECC