

Report to the Council

Date: 13 December 2022

Portfolio Holder: Councillor C Whitbread – Leader of Council

Recommending:

That the report of the Leader be noted.

1.0 Introduction

In my report to Council, I make reference to two specific items; Devolution and proposals for North Essex Authorities to work more closely together. Both these items were the subject of meetings that I attended last Thursday with fellow Council Leaders in Essex.

I have attached for all councillors' copies of the two papers that were considered by the Leaders.

The first is a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a new way of working together that fosters greater collaboration among the North Essex Councils. The second relates to the work that has been carried out across the area of Greater Essex on preparing for a possible devolution bid to Government.

2.0 North Essex Councils

Leaders of the nine local authorities covering North Essex (Tendring, Colchester, Maldon, Chelmsford, Uttlesford, Harlow, Epping Forest, Essex CC and Braintree) have met to discuss ways in which we might work closer together in the future. Following the first meeting a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been drawn up and was considered at last week's meeting held on 8th December. I have shared the draft MOU with Cabinet and attach a copy to this report. The MOU was unanimously agreed and the Chief Executives group, led by EFDC, will bring a list of proposals to the January meeting for discussion.

3.0 Devolution

Work is continuing on developing the devolution proposal that Greater Essex would wish to put to the Government. On 8th December the Leaders of the three Upper Tier Authorities (Essex CC, Thurrock and Southend) and the twelve Second Tier Authorities considered the recommendations coming from the three working groups that were established.

I will stress that Devolution is not Local Government Reform. Throughout the preparatory work District, Borough and City Councils sovereignty is retained in any

model. Any devolution deal must bring additional money and powers into the Greater Essex system for the benefit of residents and businesses.

There will be many questions and in order to inform all members there will be three open Q&A sessions (any Greater Essex member from any authority) across December and January.

Appendix 1

North Essex Councils Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix 2

Greater Essex Devolution: Report to Essex Leaders and Chief Executives