

## Wider South East Roundtables - Discussion Paper July-September 2015

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### A. Background

- Councillors at the March 2015 'Wider South East (WSE)' Summit agreed to explore how best South East (SE), East of England (E) and London politically engage on strategic housing, planning, growth and infrastructure investment, including the imminent full London Plan review. Collective discussion, co-ordination and co-operation, leading to appropriate clear outcomes, would be important given the scale of issues.
- At the request of members at the Summit, political Roundtables have been arranged to help shape future arrangements, giving as many Leaders as possible the opportunity to discuss what they want and how it is best delivered. A note of the first Roundtables in July is attached as Annex 3.

### B. Purpose of this Roundtable discussion

- The focus is to help agree the preferred political mechanism for issues to be raised and addressed going forward. Each Roundtable will give Leaders the chance to discuss key matters – including those set out in this brief paper and the more detailed Annex 1 – with the Mayor of London. The Mayor's 'Outer London Commission' is also considering similar issues from a London perspective, with a view to reaching consensus with the Roundtables on the best way forward.
- Outcomes will shape proposals for agreement at a second WSE Summit on 11 December 2015. The aim is to establish immediate political arrangements to ensure WSE views are heard during the full London Plan review, as well as setting foundations for engaging with the new Mayor following May 2016's elections.
- It will also be important that – prior to formal arrangements being established – opportunities are given for WSE political input to any early assumptions/work that the GLA uses in developing high-level growth scenarios/options in 2015-16.

### C. For Roundtable discussion: Towards more effective co-ordination of strategic policy and investment across the Wider South East

#### 1. Purpose/scope of future political co-ordination/co-operation?

*Note: At the request of members at the July roundtables, a one-side summary (Annex 2) has been prepared which - when considering the questions below – members may find helpful in thinking about the scope/purposes of future political co-ordination/co-operation.*

- 1.1 The WSE Summit indicated a need and willingness to develop political co-ordination/co-operation across London, SE and East to deal with issues of genuinely collective strategic WSE significance i.e. those which cannot be dealt with by local working. Do you support the principle? What would happen without effective co-ordination?
- 1.2 What should be the main focus of future political co-ordination/co-operation? Thinking about issues with genuine strategic implications, examples to consider may include:
  - Meeting housing need (private and affordable) across the WSE, especially with the imminent London Plan full review, including related issues re environment and land use policy e.g. statutory designations (such as AONB) and the Green Belt.
  - Economic ambition across the WSE.
  - How large-scale WSE strategic transport schemes will be funded/delivered.
  - Other infrastructure issues and public services affected by cross-boundary growth/use, e.g. schools, health, water supply/treatment, waste etc.
- 1.3 What are your initial thoughts about the high-level information or evidence you might need to discuss these issues/topics? How could such evidence be consistently prepared, or data/methodology be shared, in the future?

## 2. Geography of future political co-ordination/co-operation?

- 2.1 At what level should issues be discussed? For example:
- One level for everything i.e. Wider South East, covering SE, E and London, with linked discussions between SE/London and East/London where appropriate? **Or**
  - Different 'sub-regions' based on areas affected by particular common concerns (e.g. growth corridors or LEPs/groupings of LEPs)? **Or**
  - Do you have other options/suggestions e.g. issue-based discussions on a more ad-hoc basis involving interested local authorities; or bi-lateral discussions without wider collaborative working?

## 3. Mechanisms for future political co-ordination/co-operation?

- 3.1 How do you want to involve Leaders from across the WSE? Key questions include the format and quantity of meetings. Depending on views re '2' above, possible options for discussion include:

For a **WSE approach ('2.1.i' above)**, how might it best be organised? Options include:

- A 'WSE Standing Summit' – e.g. meeting, say, twice a year involving leaders from all 120+ SE & E councils, GLA/London? **Or**
- A more streamlined approach e.g. limited number of political leaders nominated to represent each 'county' area, with CC/DC/UA representation? **Or**
- A combination of the two above e.g. annual Summit for all, plus 2-3 meetings of a smaller representative group of Leaders?
- Other options/suggestions?

**OR for different 'sub-regional' meetings on issues of common concern ('2.1.ii' above)** how could this work?

- E.g. Small WSE political steering group, plus a network of 'sub-regional' working groups for key issues, for example based on growth corridors, LEP groupings etc?
- Would this approach also need an annual Summit for all 120+ Leaders with updates from 'sub-regional' meetings?

- 3.2 The WSE Summit agreed to set up a small political steering group to oversee current discussions. Should this continue beyond the Roundtables to oversee future engagement?
- 3.3 In addition to council Leaders, should other partners be involved in future WSE political co-ordination/co-operation? To what extent should the LEPs be involved beyond economic strategy? Should other key partners be considered e.g. infrastructure/utilities/transport providers etc?
- 3.4 Prior to formal arrangements being established, how should we ensure opportunities are given for WSE political input to any early assumptions/work that the GLA uses in developing high-level growth scenarios/options in 2015-16? E.g. Through a small political steering group as discussed under '3.2' above (currently in place to oversee the Roundtables), or are other political opportunities needed?

## 4. Supporting mechanisms for future political co-ordination/co-operation?

- 4.1 What officer/other support would be needed for the political co-ordination/co-operation and how can we make best use of limited resources? E.g. Should individual councils commit officer time and/or support for any joint technical work/research, alongside GLA? How can SEEC/SESL and EELGA (and London Councils?) best contribute?