

ALL-MEMBER MEETING

Date: 29 January 2020

Subject: **Sustainable Growth in the South East**

Report of: David Covill, Director



1 Introduction

- 1.1 South East England Councils promotes the delivery of sustainable economic and housing growth in a way that protects and enhances the environment, supports balanced communities, and provides opportunities for all areas and sections of the community. Related to this is making the case for funding and freedoms to invest in all forms of infrastructure.
- 1.2 This items focuses on two elements; housing and communities and achieving 'clean growth'. We are pleased to welcome Simon Dudley and Jonathan Werran to share their insight and to stimulate discussion on housing, the environment and the economy in the context of the new Government's approach.

2 Homes England - Delivering Housing to Grow Communities

- 2.1 Homes England is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Its immediate predecessor was the Homes and Communities Agency. Homes England's primary purpose is to accelerate the delivery of housing across England outside of London. It does this in a number of ways including direct intervention, providing expertise to the public and private sectors, and through its funding programmes. The latter has included a number funding deals agreed with local authorities across the South East, most recently in Hastings. Homes England's Business Plan is at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-england-strategic-plan-201819-to-202223>
- 2.2 Simon Dudley was appointed as Interim Chair in late 2019. He is also a Board Member and Senior Independent Director. Simon was previously Leader of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and thus brings an in-depth knowledge of the opportunities and challenges in the region, as well as the national perspective.

3 Localis – Clean Local Growth in the 2020s

- 3.1 Many councils in the South East have declared climate emergencies and are at different stages of developing their strategies. As well as implementing measures under their own control, councils are adopting a broader leadership role working with local communities and the public and private sectors in their area.
- 3.2 Localis is a not-for-profit independent think tank which specialises in research and commentary on localism. It promotes decentralisation, local leadership and capacity building. Its report ‘the Route to Clean Local Growth’ (produced with the Green Alliance) published in October 2019 focused on leadership for the environment. The report followed on from previous work by Localis on how to devise national and implement local industrial strategies.
- 3.3 Jonathan Werran is Chief Executive of Localis. Jonathan’s background is in communications and journalism. Previous roles include working at the Municipal Journal and the District Councils’ Network.

David Covill

Director