



**Housing and Development Group (HDG)  
(Working Group to SELEP)**

**Tuesday 12 September 2018  
10.30 am – 12.30 pm**

**Discussion Summary & Action Points**

Nick Fenton	Kent Developers Group - <b>Chair</b>
Alistair Pollock	South Essex Housing Group
Andrew Palmer	ESHOG/Hastings Borough Council
Brian Horton	SELEP
Cantor Mocke	Environment Agency
Helen McCabe	Chair South Essex Housing Group
Jemma Little	Haven Gateway Partnership
Lee Heley	Essex County Council
Lindsay Peddie	Environment Agency
Lucy Spencer-Lawrence	SELEP
Luke Riley	Swan
Mark Curle	Chair Essex Developers Group/Galliford Try
Phil Spearman	Environment Agency
Richard Bayley	NEGC Ltd
Steve Nunn	Moat

**1. Introductions and Apologies – Nick Fenton (Chair)**

Nick welcomed the group and noted the following apologies:

Paul Durkin, Ed Sheath, Paul Thomas, Neill Tickle, Siobhan Pierce, Richard Dawson, Tina Hinson, Sarah Robson, David Hill, Geoff Pearch, Sarah Finnegan, Ian Piper, Chris Moore, Ian Vipond, Derek Godfrey, Katie Stewart and Tracey Kerly.

**2. Review & Agree Discussion Summary & Action Points of meeting held on 20 February 2018- Nick Fenton**

These were reviewed and agreed as a true record

### **3. Thames Estuary 2100 – Phil Spearman (EA)**

Nick Fenton welcomed Cantor Mocke, Phil Spearman and Lindsay Peddie of the Environment Agency, to give a presentation on The Thames Estuary 2100 Plan, published in 2012, which was developed between the Environment Agency and partners to provide a strategic direction for managing tidal flood risk to people, property, business and infrastructure within the Thames Estuary from now until the end of the century.

The presentation set out the aspirations of the Plan, the challenges and collaborative opportunities to manage tidal flood risk and enable growth within the South East Local Enterprise Partnership area – Thames Gateway.

The key purpose of the presentation was to start a conversation with SELEP, so that there is long term engagement and to identify how to address and counter risks faced by flood defences over the next 100 years. This planning will provide certainty to investors. As the sea level rises, the shape of the river will change and it is vital to plan development accordingly.

#### **Q&A**

Luke Riley asked how the Environment Agency is working with partners to deal with current issues and if there is a dialogue in the immediate time frame

Cantor advised that while this is a high level / longer term strategy, they are beginning work with specific sites and gave the example of Purfleet. He advised that partners can engage at an early stage to avoid unblocking at the last minute.

Mark Curle asked if there is a plan to have a standard detail as to what is expected and if this could be issued as part of the land appraisal.

Mark was informed that the Environment Agency is working with individual Planning Authorities and organising locally tailored briefings, including objectives for delivery.

Nick Fenton commented that visibility is so important in this case and that Developers may not engage with Local Authorities.

It was suggested that this presentation would be useful for Kent and Essex Developers' Groups. This was agreed and would be facilitated by Brian Horton. (ACTION)

Lee Heley advised that this would need to be very practical guidance as to how it can add value for Developers. This was supported.

Nick Fenton asked how the Environment Agency would address developments that are already underway and Cantor advised that they would need to consider how these would be managed.

With regards to the differing levels of flood risk, Cantor was asked if there are solutions to enable building on more areas with increased investment. e.g. could land be released or do they object developments in certain areas?

Cantor advised that there are differences in the Thames Estuary and that they would need to manage a plan for this.

Cantor thanked colleagues for the opportunity for himself and his colleagues to speak and noted that this issue is critical to viability of development coming forward.

Brian advised that he would connect Planning Authority Groups for Kent and Essex and act as a conduit for further engagement with the LEP. (ACTION)

#### **4. SEP Refresh Update and Next Steps – Lucy Spencer-Lawrence**

Lucy Spencer-Lawrence advised that SELEP had commissioned a consultant to formulate the SEP and that a draft is planned to be presented to the LEP Strategic Board on 28th September. Following final refinements, it is intended that the final draft of the SEP will be approved at the following Strategic Board on the 7th December.

SELEP has undertaken a wealth of consultation across its whole geography and work areas, and the commitment to accelerating housing delivery has been central in these discussions. Lucy advised that she and Brian would continually work as the final draft is developed to ensure that housing remains a focus and is well articulated with the necessary hooks to ensure that it is a useful and helpful document for all partners.

Brian confirmed that this document will formally provide this group with its mandate as to how we move forward on housing and development and Lucy advised that the plan for the SEP is that issues papers will sit underneath, which outline how the priorities and aspirations can be addressed practically. It was also noted that there are cross-cutting elements and links to skills for example and as part of this, these would need to be reviewed between the working groups of the LEP.

#### **5. I-Construct Update – Jemma Little**

Jemma Little provided a brief recap on the background to i-Construct, which is a £7.5M , 3 year programme to support SMEs in the constructions sector and the supply chain.

The main deliverables include, a permanent building (innovation hub), with facilities to enable networks and to promote new technologies, including a demo centre for off-site. ERDF funding is expected imminently and if secured a January start is anticipated.

Jemma advised that this group acts as a sponsor but the project has precise governance as required by the ERDF application process.

Jemma is keen to engage with as many partners as possible and noted that the challenge to face will be in attracting the SME communities. By focusing on commercial opportunities for SMEs it is hoped this will act as a hook.



I-Construct HDG  
Update.pdf

Full details can be reviewed in this report:

Nick commented that it is very positive to see delivery on the SME side.

Brian asked Jemma where they are expected to be by the next meeting of this group in December. Jemma advised that they should by then have a contract and be well underway. She suggested that this group would be very valuable in introducing contacts and direct who should be engaged with, including any practical and specific events for the sector.

Lee Heley suggested he make connections with MHCLG and Mark Curle suggested that it is vital to co-ordinated this activity with other projects with similar aims such as the work that Harlow College is doing on skills for modern methods of construction and similar work in Southend. Jemma agreed to map this out as part of the communications planning for the project so that collaborative working with other project would be integrated into the action plan. (ACTION)

It was also discussed that links with skills is vital and Lucy suggested that Jemma contact the SELEP Skills Lead, Louise Aitken, to ensure full co-ordination. This was agreed. Alastair Pollock also suggested making connection with Richard Bambridge of ECC who is overseeing the skills area on the Housing Essex Website. This was also agreed. (ACTION)

## **6. Homes England Update – Chris Moore**

In Chris' absence, Nick Fenton provided an update on Homes England. Homes England is in the process of buying up sites rather than delivering on homes. Nick advised that there is lots of funding available, with a broad use, and encouraged partners to access it. This also includes support for commercial, as long as there is housing attached.

Brian advised that there is a clear commitment from Homes England to the work of the Developer Groups and that they are currently recruiting to increase their capacity to do more and faster.

It was agreed that the message for Homes England is to keep coming and engaging as this would be very much valued across the whole SELEP geography.

## **7. Open forum on Housing and Development Issues (Including reaction to Green Paper) – Brian Horton**

### **7.1. Green Paper**

Alastair Pollock provided an overview of **The Green Paper – “new deal for social housing”** which was published on 14 August 2018.

The Green Paper is set around **5 core themes**:

- Ensuring homes are safe and decent
- Effective resolution of complaints
- Empowering residents and strengthening the regulator
- Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities
- Expanding supply and supporting home ownership

The Green Paper includes a number of questions (as part of the consultation), some quite detailed, on for example how the regulatory framework can be improved to deal with complaints, how prejudice can be overcome and how supply can be increased, closing date 6 November.

The Green Paper can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/social-housing-green-paper-a-new-deal-for-social-housing>

The group discussed the Green Paper and agreed it was fairly underwhelming. However, there is an opportunity to facilitate some sharing between Developer Groups with regards to the consultation and this was agreed to be actioned by Brian and Alastair (ACTION).

### **7.2. Development Issues**

The group discussed an issue with the availability of commercial space.

Richard Bayley commented that it is difficult to predict space requirements by sectors and Nick Fenton advised that there is some work underway in Kent to assess the problem and find out the demand. He agreed to share this when complete. (ACTION)

Luke Riley commented that structurally they are unsure of the current position, but for the retail sector, business rates are having an adverse impact on rents.

Brian Horton commented that Derek Godfrey (Developers East Sussex Chairman), is also looking in to commercial, as is Tracey Kerly at Ashford Borough Council, and suggested that this could be taken as an agenda item to the next meeting. This was AGREED. (ACTION)

The group also discussed their frustration with water companies and Open Reach, with a view that the situation is worsening. Brian agreed to take this forward as a focus and assess where the work with Natalie Elphicke has got to.

Richard Bayley asked for some more information on all the funding vehicles that are available via SELEP and it was suggested that Capital Programme Manager, Rhiannon Mort should be invited to a future meeting to provide an overview. This was agreed. (ACTION)

In discussing the progress of modular housing, Richard Bayley suggested that North Essex could be presented as a worked example to a future meeting in the new year. This was also agreed. (ACTION)

## **8. Any other business**

### **Future Meeting Dates**

11 <sup>th</sup> December 2018	10.30am	Moat
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