**Housing and Development Group (HDG)**

**(Working Group to SELEP)**

**Tuesday 18th June 2019**

**10:30-12:30**

**Moat Homes, Dartford, Kent**

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| Nick Fenton | Kent Developers Group - **Chair** |
| Brian Horton | SELEP |
| Alex Riley | SELEP |
| Steve Nunn | Moat |
| Helen McCabe | Chair South Essex Housing Group |
| Frank Klepping | Swan |
| Mary Gibbons | CHP |
| Mark Pullin | KPOG/ Ebbsfleet DC |
| Jemma Little | Haven Gateway Partnership |
| Philip Jackson | Daedalus Environmental |
| Mark Curle | Chair Essex Developers Group/ Galliford Try |
| Siobhan Pierce | Essex County Council |
| Alethea Evans | Essex County Council |
| Paul Thomas | SELEP Housing Board Champion |
| Alastair Pollock | South Essex Housing Group/Essex Developers Group |
| Ian Piper | Ebbsfleet DC |
| Tina Hinson | Colchester BC |
| Jonathan Buckwell | DHA Planning |

1. **Introductions and Apologies**

Chair welcomed attendees and the following apologies were noted from:

Jo Ellis, Andrew Palmer, Hannah Wilson, Ian Vipond, Lee Heley, Claire Hamilton, Richard Bayley, Ed Sheath.

1. **Review & agree Notes and Action Points of meeting held on 5th March 2019**

These were reviewed and agreed as a true record.

Previous Actions:

* Make the Local Industrial Strategy a standing item on the agenda moving forward.
* The action to evaluate the impact for Enterprise Zones (EZs) has not progressed, but there is idea at SELEP-level to join these up more moving forward and potentially create a group to discuss shared working across EZs.
* The Ashford Council example will be added to the agenda of the next HDG meeting.

All further actions will be included in the main agenda discussion.

1. **Update: Local Industrial Strategy (LIS)**

Brian updated the group on the LIS, noting its importance in the wider context of government priorities and that it will be the document that sets the focused strategic direction for the South East.

The HDG have advocated for housing and infrastructure to be prioritised within the LIS. This group will be part of the wider development process for the LIS, with Brian representing the group at various stakeholder events.

Brian strongly advocated for housing and garden communities to be included within the LIS at the first stakeholder event and noted that this priority would be more effective under the Industrial Strategy ‘Infrastructure Foundation’.

The group noted the importance of the link between this group’s objectives and the wider skills agenda within the LIS.

Action: Schedule a one item meeting on the LIS between now and September if required to effectively contribute to the LIS work stream.

Action: Schedule a discussion between Helen & Sharon at SELEP (who are leading on the LIS development) and the Ebbsfleet and North Essex Garden Communities project leads.

1. **Thames Estuary 2100**

The Group noted the importance of liaising with the Environment Agency in terms of flood prevention along the River Thames in the coming decades and the types of development that this could facilitate.

The Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) will take this issue forward in Essex and Brian suggested linking this group up with the Kent Planning Officers Group (KPOG).

Action: Facilitate a meeting on this with the key contacts connected to Thames Estuary 2100 where there is a shared opportunity.

1. **Commercial Development**

Commercial development is an important priority and will be a standing item in the agenda moving forward.

Brian noted that there are potential commercial development opportunities in the South East as the GLA are considering the impact of switching commercial land to housing. But more work needs to be done to better understand this.

BNP Paribas led a presentation to the Essex Developers Group on the topic of curated retail and commercial developments – it was suggested that they be invited to present to the HDG.

The group suggested linking up the coastal and rural groups to discuss commercial development within the context of these areas – Haven Gateway have begun looking into this.

Brian noted that we have established a task and finish group on rural housing and will feed key points back to the HDG.

Brian noted the example of Ashford as a successful method of de-risking commercial development projects for developments and how there could be more shared risk with the public sector in similar projects moving forward.

The group noted that sectors, such as the creative industry, are struggling to find commercial space.

It was noted that there needed to be a better understanding of the reasons for a lack of development e.g. risk, viability and land availability.

The opportunity to work with Stansted Airport on a potential Business Park was also noted by the group.

1. **I-Construct Update**

The group were updated on the project. It was noted that the plan is to have an Innovation Hub in Braintree, virtual hubs across the SELEP geography and an innovation and growth network with the aim of supporting SMEs and fostering healthier local supply chains.

The project has been successful in securing funding but needs planning permission on the Innovation Hub before it can progress. Planning has been submitted for this and will hopefully be decided in August. If this occurs, then the project can be contracted and potentially begin delivery in September/October.

1. **Future Proof**

This project was supported by the SELEP Sector Support Fund with the central aim of accelerating the delivery of quality housing.

The project itself is a proof of concept exercise, focussing on barriers to development and potential solutions. This has led to a focus on infrastructure, off site construction and ancillary services.

From a practical point of view the viability of the model begins at 500 units as this provides enough scale. At this level there is work to understand location fit, flexible tenure and finance facilitation.

At the heart of the project is sustainability, looking for sustainable building processes and also financing. There has been some exploration of institutional investors funding this type of scheme.

Currently financial modelling is being worked on and will be completed in July. The next steps are to meet with stakeholders in July and produce and report for September/October.

1. **Housing Delivery Test**

This item derived from an EPOA commissioned sub-group in Essex which looked at Essex’s planners response to the housing delivery test.

A central consideration of the HDG is whether there could be coordinated lobbying to central government to ensure that the work that goes into producing Local Plans is not for nothing.

There is the desire from planners to engage developers on this issue, to find a solution and craft a positive response to this challenge.

The same issues are found in Kent and East Sussex.

Action: Ensure this is a standing item on the agenda.

1. **Homes England Update**

Hannah Wilson was put forward as the Homes England contact, but she sent her apologies.

There were no new Homes England announcement, but Brian noted that social housing is now higher on the agenda.

It was also noted that colleagues are exploring dialogue with Homes England on potential for greater flexibility on a case by case basis on deploying grant for s106 developments to unlock delivery of stalled sites with marginal viability.

1. **Estate Management Changes**

Action: Ian Piper to put forward the Ebbsfleet estate management model as an example.

1. **Open forum on Developers Issues**

The note below was from Richard Bayley on the North Essex Garden Communities:

* *Construction skills: 9 Garden Community projects, Stansted expansion, Sizewell & Bradwell power stations and Lower Thames Crossing project means Government and SELEP will need to step up to the plate to support the serious amount of infrastructure spend in the area in the coming decades (more than other regions). I will do my bit in terms of liaising with the other Projects and we need to work with Government and SELEP to see how they can help support in material terms;*
* *Inward Investment: North Essex is seriously lagging behind in economic metrics compared to its comparator group around the Greater South East. Garden Communities provide a great opportunity to attract national and international businesses to locate to the area and in so doing leverage infrastructure investment.*

1. **Any other business**

There was no additional business. The group were thanked for attending.

Meeting closed.

**Actions:**

* Make the Local Industrial Strategy a standing item on the agenda moving forward. **(BH)**
* The action to evaluate the impact for Enterprise Zones (EZs) has not progressed, but there is idea at SELEP-level to join these up more moving forward and potentially create a group to discuss shared working across EZs. **(BH, AR)**
* The Ashford Council example will be added to the agenda of the next HDG meeting. **(BH)**
* Schedule a one item meeting on the LIS for HDG members between now and September if required to effectively contribute to the LIS work stream. **(BH, AR)**
* Schedule a discussion between Helen & Sharon at SELEP (who are leading on the LIS development) and the Ebbsfleet and North Essex Garden Communities project leads. **(AR)**
* Facilitate a meeting on this with the key contacts connected to Thames Estuary 2100 where there is a shared opportunity. **(BH)**
* Ian Piper to put forward the Ebbsfleet estate management model as an example. **(Ian Piper)**