

Housing and Development Group (HDG)

(Working Group to SELEP)

Tuesday 12th January 2021

Video Conference

1. Introductions and Apologies – Nick Fenton (Chair)

Chair welcomed attendees to the video conference call and thanked them for attending.

2. Review & Agree Notes/Action Points of Previous Meeting – Nick Fenton

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record reflection of the meeting.

On action points:

- Viability Protocols – this will be discussed at the housing officers' group.
- Kent Rural Housing Protocol – this is now complete and will be on the agenda for a future meeting – please see the links below to the launch event and the revised protocol:

<https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/assets/uploads/2021/01/Kent-Guide-to-Developing-Homes-in-Rural-Communities.pdf>

<https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/assets/uploads/2017/02/Final-KHG-Rural-Housing-Protocol.pdf>

- Ebbsfleet Estate Management Model – this has now been agreed and will be launched in April.
- Planning & Wellbeing – will be an item at a future meeting.
- Phosphates and Nitrates – will be picked up at this meeting.

Building Garden Communities Conference – 25 March 2021, details can be found [here](#), please note as SELEP are also co-sponsoring this event with KDG and EDG, **30 Free SELEP HDG places** have been made available to members (one per member organisation, '1st come 1st served') using the following discount code: **SELEPBGC21**

3. SELEP Update – Alex Riley

Alex Riley updated the group on the status of the Economic Recovery & Renewal Strategy.

The presentation and questions were shared after the meeting with members invited to feedback.

Brian Horton noted that himself and Liz Gibney have talked to the SELEP Chair and SELEP CEO about what new communities will look like in the future and how there might be thought leadership on this from a LEP perspective – as well as inclusion in the Strategy.

Liz Gibney also stated that the most fundamental point is that we keep people interested in living in the South East. There needs to be an ongoing reason to pay the premium to live in the South East. As well as understanding the positive aspect of how communities will change as more people work from home.

Mark Curle asked if part of this work would consider potential issues such as material importation and if this becomes an issue as the housing market normalises. Alex Riley agreed this could be something that is a potential focus in terms of the Delivery Plan.

4. Phosphates and Nitrates – Nick Fenton

Chair noted that this is a major issue across Kent and Medway. It is affecting the River Stour and any developments that might feed into this – this currently affects a number of district/borough authorities in Kent. Tests have indicated a significant phosphates and nitrates issue – this does not mean that this isn't an issue elsewhere, but tests have not yet been done.

Chair stated the need for a joined-up approach to deal with this issue. Natural England have noted that if there was a strategy that all districts can sign up to this might unblock this issue.

This is an issue that both MHCLG and Homes England are aware of. Shona Johnstone asked roughly how many homes were potentially being held it – the figure was in the tens of thousands. Brian Horton replied they will respond to Shona with a specific figure.

Chair noted that any development up to 2030 in this area could be impacted by this. But the incremental nature of housing delivery can buy time to deliver a solution.

5. New Standard Methodology for Calculating Local Housing Need – Jonathan Buckwell

Brian Horton informed the group that Jonathan Buckwell was unable to attend the meeting. Noting that the decision on the standard methodology has resulted effectively in the status quo in terms of required delivery.

Despite this, there is still a significant challenge with some areas still not reaching existing housing delivery targets.

Jeremy Potter noted that EPOA had concerns around the outputs of the original methodology and potential unintended consequences. However, this has now defaulted back to a position that existed before as opposed to a potential hybrid approach which could have been beneficial.

Brian Horton noted that SELEP will be hiring an individual to focus on data and intelligence and this could potentially assist the group in tracking activity.

6. MHCLG Engagement and Brexit Update – Brian Horton

There is ongoing engagement with MHCLG and Homes England on market intelligence. There has been increasing discussion on the impacts of Brexit alongside Covid-19.

A meeting is also being set up with Developer Group Chairs and the Housing Minister.

It was also noted that if there were any issues that should be raised at these meetings please share them with Brian Horton.

The group noted issues with the current consultation on Permitted Development Rights which can result in the wrong housing in the wrong location, potentially damaging towns centres and businesses.

7. IConstruct Update – Jemma Little

Jemma Little updated the group that the target is to support 305 SMEs over the last couple of years. About 50 SMEs have been signed up with 50 in the pipeline and 10% of these are looking to join the I-Construct network and mentoring.

Since the last meeting the website has launched, as well as branding and a broader communications push. This has generated interactions and sign-ups with new companies. The member area of the website for the networks is now being developed – this will help build the innovation ecosystem that companies need. An events programme is also now in development.

Website: www.i-construct.org.uk for further information.

8. Homes England Update – Shona Johnstone

Shona Johnstone that the new Homes England Chair has asked for a number of reviews including priorities in the high growth area – which includes the Thames Estuary.

The Planning White Paper has decided not to go ahead with the changes to the algorithm that were originally proposed.

DPP3 is being replaced with Dynamic Purchasing System which is an ongoing system which will allow continued engagement and should be helpful for SMEs.

There will be a revisit of the evidence base for the Thames Estuary Growth Commission and there has been a tender out for consultants on this. This study is being jointly run with the Thames Estuary Growth Board.

9. Lower Thames Crossing – Brian Horton/ Emily Dawson

Brian Horton informed the group that as part of the legacy work, and looking at future investment for the Lower Thames Crossing, the suggestion is that, as part of the annual review of the Terms of Reference, this group adds the Lower Thames Crossing as an area of focus.

Emily Dawson noted that the broad ambition was to ensure that DIT colleagues use this group to identify areas where the Lower Thames Crossing can assist to maximise regional housing growth and delivery, including what the barriers to this might be.

The group agreed that this should be added to the Terms of Reference when it is considered at the annual review.

10. AOB

Next meeting 10:30am Tuesday 23 March 2021 – MS Teams.

Future Meeting Dates:

10.30 am Tuesday 11 May 2021 – MS Teams

10.30 am Tuesday 29 June 2021 – MS Teams