

Housing and Development Group (HDG)

(Working Group to SELEP)

Tuesday 23rd March 2021

Video Conference

Notes

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 approved.

Actions that remain will carry over to future meetings.

3. Updated SELEP HDG Terms of Reference (ToR) – Brian Horton

Brian Horton introduced the refreshed ToR for this working group. The group had no questions and the revised ToR was formally adopted (attached annex 1).

4. SELEP Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy Update – Alex Riley

Alex Riley updated the group that the SELEP Strategic Board had endorsed the Economic Recovery & Renewal Strategy – and that this is now the principal strategic document in use by SELEP. A shortened version of the strategy will now be developed for a private sector audience.

SELEP continues to engage with Freeport East and Thames Freeport and will continue to update this group on progress.

The SELEP Covid-19 Skills and Business Support Funds have now finished the tender process for delivery consortia and information regarding successful bidders will be published in the next few weeks.

There is a small amount (£126,000 approx.) of SELEP Sector Support Fund remaining and the information for this fund is on the SELEP website.

5. Feedback Chris Pincher Meeting and MHCLG/HE Engagement – Brian Horton

Brian Horton provided an update on the meeting with Chris Pincher the Minister of State for Housing and proposals for a follow up meeting in May. Attached (annex 2) to these notes is a letter sent by the SELEP area Developer Group chairs to the Minister covering all the key areas discussed at the meeting and agreed follow up actions. Including further work and engagement with officials on First Homes.

6. Phosphates and Nitrates – Nick Fenton

Nick Fenton updated the group on the Phosphates and Nitrates issue in East Kent. Nick advised that good progress is being made in a multi-agency response to respond to the current moratorium on progressing new planning consents. The matter is now being considered at a senior political level with Nick having personally raised this with the Minister of State for Housing Chris Pincher at their recent meeting.

7. I-Construct Update – Jemma Little

Jemma Little updated the group on progress with the delivery of the I-Construct project.

Further information on the range of activities and services offered through I-Construct are detailed on the I-Construct website:

<https://i-construct.org.uk/>

8. Homes England / Thames Estuary Update – Shona Johnstone

Shona Johnstone updated the group on the Thames Estuary Study – which is jointly commissioned by Homes England and the Thames Estuary Growth Board.

It is a housing, infrastructure and connectivity study that will study the current planning situation (including all major projects), analyse the order of magnitude of the shortfall between current and target delivery, consider aspirations of partners, outline scenarios for good growth (e.g. accelerated growth, business as usual and super high growth), analysis of challenges arising from the impact of COVID-19, and considerations for delivery including MMC, SEMs, and place-making.

The first stage is a baseline report which, when approved, will move the project to Stage 2 'Modelling of housing, economic & transport growth scenarios' – there is a plan to hold technical workshops in April-May at this stage.

David Godfrey noted that this work wants to define the next phase of infrastructure priorities – looking at the area strategically and what is going to enable balanced growth. Conscious that people's Local Plans are in delicate stages across the Estuary and this is not meant to add to the workload, but is there to support ongoing initiatives.

Brian asked, regarding the workshops, from a business perspective if there is a role for large and small developers in those workshops. Shona noted there is an extensive stakeholder database which does include a long list of developers and housing associations that will be invited.

9. Lower Thames Crossing – Emily Dawson

Brian noted that he will follow this item up at the next meeting – Chair stated any pertinent information will be sent out to the group.



10. Open Forum – Brian Horton

Brian Horton noted, further from the Chris Pincher discussion, it was apparent that there was a focus on First Homes. The Minister sought a view from the Developer Group Chairs on the First Homes policy – and it was noted that this policy is likely to come forward as a high priority for Government. Everyone from this group will be getting an invite to a roundtable discussion on this set for 17 May 2021 chaired by Brian Horton, sponsored by DHA. Where colleagues from Homes England and MHCLG will update us on current thinking and potentially a pilot will be launched by then.

11. Any other business

The next meeting is scheduled 11 May 2021 – an item on wellbeing, and the Kent Rural Protocol will be on the agenda.

Meeting closed.