

Housing and Development Group (HDG)

(Working Group to SELEP)

Tuesday 11th May 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 of Meeting on 23rd March 2021

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed and the actions will be covered off in the meeting.

3. SELEP Update

Alex Riley updated the group that SELEP has published its Economic Recovery & Renewal Strategy – alongside a shortened Executive Summary version and video, available here:

<https://www.southeastlep.com/our-strategy/economic-recovery-and-renewal-strategy/>

It was also noted that there will be a Major Project Group Skills meeting on 26th May which attendees can sign up for here (click image hyperlink):



Lucy Spencer-Lawrence noted that SELEP is planning to hold a number of roundtable discussions on the Communities for the Future strategic priority. These will also link to the wider place-shaping and garden communities agenda.

The first roundtable session will focus on addressing the challenge of Net Zero for developers and the construction industry. The group were asked to suggest attendees for this session:

- Lee Heley suggested David Richardson from Willmott Dixon as an attendee – noting he also sits on the LEP Board.
- Dave Harris suggested Paul Henry who is Chair of the North Kent SME group.

Paul Thomas stated that an issue for immediate discussion within communities is on the affordability of new developments, with the key issue being additional estate fees. In some case this can be particularly onerous and can include not only local estate maintenance but also community woodland and facilities, and cost surface water structures.

Simon Payne stated it was important to recognise that we are in a period of transition and we need to future proof our plans.

Jemma Little noted that there is also a huge issue of existing stock and retrofit. Alistair Pollock reemphasised this point, stating that in relation to retrofit there have been some really good pilots done by local authority and housing authority partners, and that it was worth looking at Energiesprong via Moat in Maldon.

4. Chris Pincher 18/5 Meeting and MHCLG/HE Engagement

Brian Horton noted that the meeting with Chris Pincher was delayed but that this is due to take place on 18/5 (now 25/5) and the discussion is expected to focus on sector-wide issues and a focus on the First Homes policy and what it might mean for the SELEP area.

The group noted that materials costs were up significantly and that this should be raised as a potential barrier to delivery, recent developer feedback are:

- Timber costs up by up 25%
- Cost price inflation across all materials c.4%
- 'Cracks appearing everywhere' - supply issues with: Roof Tiles, Hanging Tiles, Mortar, Steel, Garage Doors etc.
- Labour supply issues/Sub-Contractors: Shortage of Roofers and Brick Layers
- Reports of stockpiling of white goods due to concerns of erratic supply

5. Phosphates and Nitrates Update

The group were informed that senior ministers at DEFRA and MHCLG have been asked to meet on this issue but we still await a confirmed date. There is some background work with the planning advisory service ongoing in East Kent. With a potential proposal that could involve land acquisition. KMEP have asked for an update on this on the 19th May – so there may be more information then.

Chair noted this issue will form part of the discussion with Chris Pincher.

6. Planning and Wellbeing

Brian Horton and Jeremy Potter agreed that that will be added as an agenda item at the next meeting.

Jeremy updated the group that there is work underway at Chelmsford City Council to embed health and wellbeing into placemaking. Incentivising developers to make changes at the earliest stages of development. There is a 'LiveWell' brand associated with this.

Further information: <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-new-local-plan/livewell-development-accreditation-scheme/>

7. Kent and Medway Rural Housing Protocol

There was a presentation on the Kent and Medway Rural Housing Protocol (annex 1 attached) and please follow link below to the Kent Housing Group website:

<https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/guide-developing-affordable-homes-rural-communities/>

Keith Harrison stated that this was a focus on both socioeconomic wellbeing in rural areas but also public policy for rural communities. Brian stated that this was a powerful piece of work in raising visibility of these issues and getting political leaders engaged.

8. Homes England Update

Shona Johnstone informed the group that housing, and planning will be a major part of the Queen's Speech.

Homes England are recruiting a new Chief Executive and expect an appointment, alongside some other senior appointments, to be made in a matter of weeks. A new Chief Finance Officer is also expected to be appointed.

There have been ongoing discussions regarding the Thames Estuary study with TEGB. The first stage of the study was completed a month ago and the consultants are currently doing a desktop analysis on housing numbers. Workshops were run at the end of April/ early May and the study team are collating feedback from these – a further session will be held soon on what the options will look like.

9. Lower Thames Crossing

Agenda item to be carried over to next meeting.

10. Open Forum

Liz Gibney asked that discussions with Chris Pincher be tied to the work the Lucy is doing on future communities.

Meeting closed.

Next Meeting

10.30 am Tuesday 29 June 2021 – MS Teams