**Housing and Development Group (HDG)**

**(Working Group to SELEP)**

**1st March 2022**

**Video Conference**

1. **Introductions and Apologies**

The notes of the previous meeting were approved.

1. **SELEP Update – Alex Riley**

Alex Riley updated the group on the status of the LEP Review considering the Government’s publications on Levelling Up. SELEP will remain operating as normal given the absence of a County Deal in the South East region.

It was also noted that SELEP, in partnership with Arts Council England, recently published a report titled ‘Creative High Streets’ which may be of interest to the group. Accessible here: <https://www.southeastlep.com/creative-high-streets/>

1. **Levelling Up**

Brian Horton updated the group on how housing fits within the Government’s broader plans for levelling up. Noting Michael Gove’s quote that it is one of the most important elements of levelling up.

This also means that SELEP and the Housing & Development Group needs to be at the forefront in developing a narrative for what levelling up means for the region.

1. **Terms of Reference**

Updated Terms of Reference were approved.

1. **Lower Thames Crossing**

There is a skills survey on planning resources that has been shared and the results of this will be shared with colleagues and considered.

1. **Planning**

It was noted that, as part of monthly engagement working with colleagues at DLUCH and the LEP level, there is work ongoing to form a better understanding of the challenges facing local authority planners. From a skills, recruitment, and retention perspective. This work has been shared with colleagues in Government.

Shona noted that the Local Government Capacity Centre is working on this and have sent a survey out to all local authorities to understand capacity issues and problem areas.

1. **DLUCH Engagement**

The Developer Group Chairs wrote to the Housing Minister on January 17th, we are now aware that there is a new minister in post and an introduction letter will be sent with the same agenda points covered.

1. **Phosphates & Nitrates**

Work continues but there is still no full resolution to the issues ongoing. This has mean there are not many meaningful housing approvals across Kent. Sites in other areas continue to go up in price.

1. **Affordability**

Paul Thomas noted that there is a meeting next week to further explore affordability issues. One of the key points is estate management charges which are significantly inflated.

1. **First Homes**

Colleagues noted that there still seems to be a lack of understanding about the wider impacts of the First Homes policy and clarity is still being sought.

1. **AOB**

Mark Curle noted the ongoing pressure on SMEs in the sector, particularly as a result of price inflation.

Meeting ended.