**Essex Developers Group – Terms of Reference (June 2019)**

**Essex Developers Group (EDG) is a unique association of Councils, owners, enablers and developers in Essex.**

**Key objectives**

* **Accelerate housing delivery and growth**
* **Maximise commercial opportunities**
* **Support shared ambition, collaboration and intelligence**
* **Improving the process of Local Plan making and Development Management**

**The benefits of being a member of EDG include:**

* An effective communication channel between the private and public sectors to remove barriers to growth and bring about deliverable development.
* The opportunity to play a part in the growth of EDG to deliver future prosperity to Essex within the Government’s localism agenda and structures.
* Access to key officers to promote joint working at local authority and county level.
* Quarterly meetings, providing an excellent opportunity for networking and presentations on legal matters, planning, the environment, sustainability and design, as well as learning from other developers’ experiences and exchanging useful contacts.

**Key areas for joint working**

Policy / evidence base

* Sharing and collaboration to deliver sound Local Plans / Joint Strategic Plans (JSP)
* Shared understanding of evidence base eg Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), strategic transport investment plans / other infrastructure requirements, and the opportunity to shape future development in Essex.

Sharing information on publically owned land and disposals

Working in partnership

* Engaging with a much stronger voice with public and private agencies on current and future Local Plan / JSP developments, investment in transportation, affordable housing programmes and with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).
* Opportunity to engage with Government, discussions on national funding for infrastructure, Homes England investment and key national delivery agencies.
* Working more closely with the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA), Opportunity South Essex, North Essex Garden Communities (NEGC), Haven Gateway, Heart of Essex and West Essex, Essex County Council, the Unitary and District Authorities, Registered Providers and the Homes England with opportunities for creating joint ventures or entering partnering arrangements.
* Working with the Essex Employment and Skills Board to continue to invest in the local skills pipeline and training provision; addressing shortages, future needs and enabling greater quality homes and accelerated delivery by developing a highly skilled workforce.
* Developing links with the Kent Developers Group (KDG), Cambridgeshire Developers Forum, Developers East Sussex (DES) and other strategic alliances.
* Continue to develop / enhance the Housing Essex website to support the aims and objectives of the Group. <https://www.housingessex.org/>

Site development

* Reviewing an Essex wide pipeline of strategic sites with the opportunity to deliver schemes on the ground.
* Reviewing Public Sector land disposal to ensure a strategic approach to the disposal of land with the support of Essex County Council. For interactive map, see: <http://epam.idoxgroup.com/index.php/interactive-map> For Homes England’s Land Hub:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-england-land-hub>

* Updating the already published Greater Essex Planning Protocol to assist with delivery.
* Support adoption of the Essex wide viability protocols – setting parameters; creating a level playing field.
* Contribute to the ongoing revision of existing and new guidance including the Essex Design Guide and other housing / planning related documents.
* Lobbying for strategic infrastructure asks.
* Other areas for joint working could include discussions around strategic planning through the Duty to Cooperate or other mechanisms, Right to Buy, Starter Homes, how to bring forward small sites and provide support to SME house builders / supply chains.

**External Liaison and working arrangements**

The Group will be an independent body supported by SELEP, Essex CC (including Essex Skills Board, BEST, EPOA etc.), Unitary and District Authorities and Homes England. The accountable body for the Group will be Castle Point BC who will act as coordinator with the assistance of other enabling officers across the County.

**Membership:**

Developers, contractors, consultants, solicitors, housing associations, Essex Planning Officers Association, Essex CC and Essex district and unitary local authorities with the support of the Homes England and South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

There will be a two tier membership rate subject to the Chairs’ discretion as follows:

*Full membership***:** decision making role on EDG, attendance at quarterly meetings and all events (up to three representatives), access to key government officials.

*Associate membership:*  advisory role on EDG, attendance at quarterly meetings and some events (up to one representative).

Future membership will be at the discretion of the wider group.

**Declarations of interest**

All full and association members must give a declaration of interest at the beginning of the meeting in relation to any specific agenda items where it might be considered they have an interest.

**Election of the Chair**

The Chair of the Essex Developers Group will be elected for a period of three years from among the full members of the group at a meeting of members. The first election will take place on the 18 October 2016 and every three years thereafter.

**Meeting arrangements**

The Group will meet quarterly and once a year at the annual Essex Housing Conference.

Pre-meetings of the Chairs from the Essex Developers Group, Essex Housing Groups, Essex Planning Officers Group, Essex CC Heads of Service Group, with support from advisory members will take place regularly throughout the year to ensure agendas and work programmes are planned accordingly.

Meetings will be themed around specific development such as skills / training, Duty to Cooperate, devolution, viability, Homes England funding, Essex Strategy and specialist housing provision and healthcare.

The Group is supporting a Housing Excellence Awards programme in 2019.

**Funding**

To be agreed annually (current subscription is £3,000 full member and £1,500 for associate).

**Work programme**

Based on a work programme developed through the Chairs Group reporting to EDG on a quarterly basis.

For further information please contact Alastair Pollock, the Strategy Coordinator at apollock@castlepoint.gov.uk.

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