

EHOG Meeting
24th September 2019
CHP offices

Welcome and apologies

- Attendees; Tina Hinson (Chair), Judith Snares (Uttlesford), Stuart Morris (Brentwood BC), John Grisley (Castlepoint BC), Jo Albini (Braintree DC), Paul Gaylor (Chelmsford CC), Shirley Hall (Maldon DC), Peter Doherty (Moat), Alison Battersby (Swan), Tim Clarke (Tendring DC), Alison Gibbs (ECC Minute taker), Moira Griffiths (Peabody), Iain Shaw (Peabody), Dave Black (Peabody), David Carter (Brentwood BC), Sebastian Cragg (Peabody), Helen McCabe (Thurrock BC), Rod Cullen (Essex County Council) Kerry Preston (Estuary), Peter Doherty (Moat), Nhi Huynh-Ma (Homes England), Tina Dodd (Basildon BC), Ian Christmas (Clarion Housing), Christopher White (Essex CC), John Grisley (Castle Point BC), Alastair Pollock (EDG / SEHG), Jodi Thompson (Southend BC), Chris Bellis-Wright (Southend BC), Alison Gibbs (ECC).

Apologies

- Shona Johnstone (Homes England), Louisa Moss (Rochford DC), Gary Roffey (Hastoe Group), Brian Horton, (SELEP), Siobhan Pierce Essex CC), Kathy Ayres (Basildon), Kate Franklin (CHP), Lee Heley (ECC), Akinola Oyefeso (Sanctuary), Joseph Turner (Peabody), Lisa Whiting (Harlow BC), Christine Lyons (Basildon), Kerry Preston (Estuary), Tracey Walker (Legal & General HA), Lesley O'shea (Basildon BC), Sara Thakkar (Colne).

Minutes of SEHG meeting 2 July

- Hometrack's Comparables module now added to the group's subscription for an initial period of one year.
- Terms of reference agreed and published on Housing Essex website.

Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting

1 Brexit and housing implications – JA

JA provided an overview of the possible implications to the settlement status process following Brexit. There is no clear understanding of what the need might be or the supporting procedures. Currently if documents need to be scanned and verified the nearest location for this is Dartford. If the requirement is there going forward, how do we support EU citizens seeking settled status? Perhaps a number of authorities could work together to assist those affected? It would be helpful to know if anyone is leading on this in our LAs.

TH has posed the question of support at Colchester. Directors have confirmed that this would not be a role for housing and that we should be signposting. However, it is not known who to sign post to.

Perhaps each LA needs to consider this. Migrant Help (commissioned by the Government) work with those that are more vulnerable and therefore this support is not available to everyone. It is worth noting that this service is only commissioned until March and it is not known what will happen following that date.

TH has spoken to a national landlord on this issue and it is suggested that the main concern is those that have been resident in the UK for 20 - 25 years and who are unable to prove their status. Those settled more recently tend to have documentation to support their status.

Action - all LA representatives are asked to investigate this issue within their districts and to notify JA of the outcome.

Floating Support service may be a good link in and JA will feed into the Essex Wide Groups

Some are attending the planned Resilience Meeting but there is no clear agenda for this at present.

Sharing information will be very important. What will happen if we don't do anything? It was suggested to share resources and to have conversations with other areas – Peterborough mentioned as an example.

Celia Trudget from EELGA is invited to next EHOOG meeting and she may be able to give an Eastern region perspective.

2 Affordable Housing / Essex Prevents; Prison Release Protocol – RC

Apologies from DB, from the Essex CC Housing Growth Team and author of the Affordable Housing paper. This paper was circulated prior to the meeting. RC talked through the content with the group.

Following the successful launch of the Prison Release Protocol, RC gave this thanks to everyone for their input and support of this paper.

The protocol has been widely circulated but if anyone is still in need of a copy they are asked to contact RC.

Recent announcement of the Government's £318m Housing Infrastructure Funding for Essex will bring road and rail transport benefits including a new railway at Beulieu, Chelmsford and a rapid transport system for Colchester. For further details, see: <https://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/bids-and-funding/housing-infrastructure-fund.aspx>

3 AHP / LEP / ASELA / bidding update – NHM / BH / AP / RC

Homes England

SJ gave apologies but sent a brief update as follows: “we are currently working with ASELA on the housing strategy for south Essex. This work is being led by Martin Whiteley. On 1st October the new structure within Homes England formally comes into being, with a new Markets, Partners and Places Directorate in the south east being headed up by Paul Kitson. Staff are being recruited into post and over the autumn/winter we will be undertaking an engagement exercise with all local authorities in the south east. I will be the single point of contact, in the first instance, for local authorities not working on specific Homes England programmes, such as garden communities, HIF etc.”

NHM referred to the recent appointments of Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP as the new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Esther Louise McVey PM as Minister of State for Housing and Planning.

Chairman Sir Edward Lister stepped down, now strategy advisor for PM, interim in place. Homes England maintaining “strong muscle” to support delivery of housing through its programmes.

Home England Strategic Plan published last year with new operational model MPP, Market, People and Places. Account managers will form part of Multi-discipline teams to drive housing delivery forward.

Directors for South East is Paul Kitson, and Terry Fuller heads-up Acquisitions. Investment ongoing through for example HIF and SOAHP. Social rent being prioritised.

The interactive Land Hub showing sites available for development or disposal by Homes England can be viewed [here](#):

4 SELEP

Preparing a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) setting out long term ambitions for the South East based on clear evidence and aligned to the National Industrial Strategy. Will help inform nation policy and impact of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Draft LIS expected October the go to co-designing stage with Government before publication March 2020. Housing Development feeding into the consultation to ensure it has a housing focus.

5 ASELA

Excellent progress is being made on the South Essex Plan, and it is anticipated that the Issues stage will be launched in the early new year. The Issues will be the first suggestion of how the spatial strategy could develop across 6 growth corridors. The Plan will work to the Standard methodology assessment of 147,000 new homes by 2050.

Running along-side this is a Productivity Strategy, which will effectively act as the South Essex Local Industrial Strategy setting out how a transformational approach to employment growth can be achieved, supported by the right housing and improved connectivity

A connectivity workstream is looking at what mobility will look like in 2050 based on the forecast level of growth, access to jobs and services, and strategic links.

We will also shortly request stakeholders to sign up for a consultation and engagement database so direct links can be made.

6 The new UK resettlement scheme for the most vulnerable refugees 2020/21– CW

CW confirmed that the Refugee Resettlement Programme has been extended for another year and ECC will be asking the LAs to offer suitable properties for 2020 – 21.

Colchester first resettlement area. Coming to an end, but government announced new resettlement scheme for the most vulnerable refugees.

17 June, Home Sec now Chancellor, announced re-settlement programme up to 5,000 people. Commitment still there. Context 70m displaced humans across the planet. 6.7m from Syria, then Afghanistan. New programme consolidates three previous programmes, not about asylum, or nothing to do with EU Settlement scheme. Run by Home Office but MHCLG also involved. Funding available, tariff for 5 years on a tapering basis. Voluntary scheme, however certain requirements, that cut across two tier authority area. 5 September all Essex LAs political agreed to support the programme at Leader and CE level. Need housing that is at LHA rates, suitable and sustainable. Seeking a coordinated response from LAs to support programme in 2020-21, if stock owning or through brokering arrangement with ALMO or Housing Association. Need units of accommodation and number of beds and if possible, post code for schools etc. Re-settlement fund available to support the family with services etc.

Action The papers detailing this programme will be circulated to the group.

7 Housing Excellence Awards update – AP

AP confirmed the inaugural awards ceremony would take place on the evening of 10 October following the successful shortlisting of entries earlier in the summer.

A draft programme has been circulated to invited guests.

The ceremony will include a welcome from Alison Inman and be hosted by Danny Crates (Paralympic Gold Medallist) who will also give a key note speech.

There will be post event photos / video and press release on the Housing Essex website – [Awards page](#).

8 Sub group updates: ALL

SEHG Private Sector Housing – group last met on 18 September, preparation well underway for first joint South Essex Landlords’ Forum on 13 November at Holiday Inn, Basildon. SE authorities will also be launching a “Ready to Rent Offer” to landlords targeting empty properties either between lets or new on the market. The event will address the top 4 challenges for landlords with a good range of speakers confirmed. The Group also discussed the Government’s recent review of Selective Licensing, approaches to tackling non-decent homes and whether a refresh of local authority stock condition assessments was needed. Legislative changes and consultation were also discussed including the “the New Deal for Renting”.

EHO

Minutes of EHO 25th July 2019

Essex Vision MOU

Feedback was requested during April’s EHO meeting and this is outstanding.

Action – all to review and feedback to RC.

MAPPA

Two points of contact were requested from each of the districts. Basildon, Southend and Thurrock have yet to advise.

The ELGA had previously requested volunteers to participate in a number of workstreams. PG confirmed that the groups are now resourced and are up and running but others can still get involved.

Action – PG to send details of the groups through to AG.

The consideration of the membership of SELEP. **Action** – this discussion is outstanding. Tina and Lee to discuss.

TH and SG have drafted the legal performance requirements. This will be presented in due course.

More nominations are needed to review the Emergency Accommodation MOU.

Action – nominations are to be sent through to AG.

The list of current protocol workstreams is currently being compiled and will be circulated in due course.

Action – further to the last meeting, could all LAs advise AG of the EHO leads for their district.

Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

No update from sub-groups for this meeting.

9 Any other business Date of next meeting

AP - Guided tour of Moat's Energiesprong retro fit pilot project in Maldon on 3 October, 10-12.30pm. For further information please contact Jess Peacock – jwp@londoncommunications.co.uk

Brentwood asked the group if there are any collective initiatives in the County in relation to empty homes.

TH confirmed that the Brentwood Leader had posed the same question to the Leaders and CXs Group. It was agreed that EHOG should be tasked with looking at this. The minutes from this meeting are awaited.

Basildon has been gathering relevant data for their district. It was suggested that the return on the investment needed is not necessarily as cost effective as officers might think.

Action TD to send the Basildon data to AP and AG

AP confirmed that he monitored empty homes. The numbers had previously reduced in the South East but that numbers are now on the rise.

Action TH agreed that this would be discussed at EHOG once it is clear from ECEA what they want EHOG to do.

JT from Southend. queried the various LA approaches to sheltered housing and housing need. Again, TD confirmed that Basildon has been reviewing existing schemes, the delivery of services and service charges.

Communal rooms could provide additional income but negotiations with the schemes can be difficult.

IC of Clarion confirmed that they have been considering multi-generation schemes for the future. Extra Care could provide insight to any thoughts on this. Although they do not operate in Essex.

TH suggested that the Eastern Housing LIN had considered this previously but she believes that this group may no longer be in place. Post meeting note: Eastern Housing LIN still exists but administered centrally.

Action EHOG will take this forward and consider the involvement of the Essex Sheltered Housing Group.

Date of next EHOG meeting 19th December, Greenfields, Braintree. 10.30 – 1pm

Date of next SEHG (joint with EDG) meeting 12th December, 11.00-2.00pm, Swan Nu Living, Tramway House 3 Tramway Avenue Stratford London E15 4PN