

Essex Developers Climate Action Charter - introduction

In line with UK Government policy and their [Net Zero Strategy – Building Back Greener](#), the Essex Developers Group has agreed to sign up to a Developers Climate Action Charter with the four-fold aim of:

1. Securing global net-zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degree C within reach
2. Adapting to protect communities and natural habitat
3. Mobilising finance
4. Working together to deliver the above goals

The Government's 10 Point Plan for a Green Revolution forming part of the Net Zero Strategy, particularly in relation to Green Transport (5), Green Buildings (7) and Protecting our Natural Environment (9) provides the framework for this Charter, as will the outcomes of COP26 which will be considered in the Charter's Action Plan.

EDG recognizes the need for urgent action across the built environment including reducing emissions from buildings, transport, energy and waste.

EDG can help to plan for this future change by careful designing and locating private market / affordable housing in sustainable locations, minimising energy and transport and supporting the roll-out of smart infrastructure.

EDG can adapt and protect communities and natural habitats, through improving resilience of existing homes and neighbourhoods and improving access to green space. Also prioritising green and blue infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage systems.

EDG can help mobilise finance from both the public sector in terms of grants and loans and private sector through fund raising, Section 106 contributions, to support continued investment, resourcing and training to meet the UK's sustainable development ambitions (in their Net Zero Strategy) and those being developed more locally through the Essex Climate Action Commission and through professional bodies such as the Royal Town Planning Institute.

Key Essex Climate Action residential targets are set out as follows:

- Two thirds all dwellings to be retrofitted as far as possible to net zero carbon standards by 2030.
- Existing residential buildings - carbon emissions reduction of 50% by 2030 and Carbon Zero by 2040.
- All New Homes Consented to be Carbon Zero by 2025.
- All New Homes and non-domestics buildings consented to be Carbon Positive by 2030 (along with the schools zero carbon programme).

Meeting these ambitious targets will deliver a number of additional benefits from Climate Action. In the construction sector alone in Essex, these include:

- 200,000 new sustainable homes & 40+ schools
- Retrofit c800,000 existing homes of which 70% are EPC D or below
- Bringing 67,000 homes out of fuel poverty
- Green construction expected to create 1.8m new jobs of which 0.5m in Wider South East

Working together to deliver the ambition to collaborate and respond to climate change across the built environment sector is very at the forefront our planning across the county. The level of climate action required cannot be done in isolation. This will require a “whole systems” approach where there is collaboration between house builders, contractors, agents and public sector who will also need to embrace cross departmental working and engagement with local communities.

To this end, Essex Developers Group have agreed a Developers Climate Action Charter.

DRAFT

THE ESSEX DEVELOPERS GROUP CLIMATE ACTION CHARTER

BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE ESSEX DEVELOPERS GROUP (EDG)

AND

HOMES ENGLAND AND THE SOUTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

AND

ESSEX PLANNING OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (REPRESENTING THE 15 COUNCILS OF ESSEX)

(THE PARTIES)

(1) The Parties share the common understanding that:

(a) Scientific consensus has developed that increasing emissions of human caused greenhouse gases (GHG), including carbon dioxide, methane and other GHG emissions, that are released into the atmosphere is affecting the Earth's climate;

(b) the evidence of global warming is unequivocal and the effects of climate change are already evident across South East England and Essex;

(c) reducing GHG emissions will generate environmental, health and economic benefits for individuals, families, and communities;

(d) climate change and reducing GHG emissions are issues of importance to Essex businesses and residents;

(e) we call on Government to urgently accelerate their efforts to implement effective measures to reduce GHG emissions and anticipate and prepare for climate change impacts; (as set out in their Zero Carbon Strategy and the targets recently agreed at COP26).

(f) protecting the environment can be done in ways that promote economic prosperity; and

(g) it is important to take action and to work together to share best practices, to reduce GHG emissions and address the impacts of climate change.

(2) The Parties acknowledge that each has an important role in addressing climate change and that:

(a) Essex partners have already started to take action on climate change, through the publication of the Essex Climate Action Commission in July 2021.

(b) House builders, contractor and agents are also taking action on climate change, through for example, development of zero carbon housing developments, examples to be shared.

(c) local authorities including Essex County Council, Unitary, City, Borough and District local authorities are developing strategies and programmes to retrofit the existing housing stock, encouraging green developments such as Garden Communities and development of EV stations.

(d) Housing associations are also leading the way on pilots designed to retrofit their existing housing stock and developing low / zero carbon housing for the benefit of resident especially those suffering from fuel poverty, examples to be shared.

(e) These actions create the foundation for the Parties to be leaders in affecting climate change.

(3) The members share the common goals of:

- (a) fostering co-operation across the building sector and inter-governmental relations;
- (b) aiming to reduce GHG emissions, including both their own and those created by others;
- (c) removing legislative, regulatory, policy, or other barriers to taking action on climate change;
- (d) implementing programmes, policies, or legislative actions, that facilitate reduced GHG emissions, where appropriate;
- (e) encouraging communities that are sustainable, healthy and socially responsive; and
- (f) encouraging infrastructure and a built environment that supports the economic and social needs of the community while minimising its environmental impact.
- g) being prepared for the Future Homes Standard and working towards a cost neutral solution to Climate Change.
- h) supporting biodiversity and measures to secure net gain in new development.
- i) encourage water conservation, water supply and flood protection as part of regional infrastructure, working with the water companies.

(4) In order to contribute to reducing GHG emissions:

(a) Signatory members agree to develop strategies and take actions to achieve the following goals:

- (i) being carbon neutral in respect of building by 2030.
- (ii) measuring and reporting on their community's GHG emissions profile using Government recognised tools hosted on the [UK - SME Climate hub \(businessclimatehub.org\)](https://businessclimatehub.org) or as otherwise directed by Government.
- (iii) creating sustainable, more energy efficient rural and urban communities (e.g.

foster a built environment that supports a reduction in car dependency and energy use such as the walkable neighbourhood concept,

establish / develop local planning policies and processes that support fast tracking of green development projects, and green infrastructure strategies including supporting the emerging Local Nature Partnership and nature recovery strategies.

adopt sustainable planning practices that encourage land use patterns that increase density and reduce sprawl, drawing on principles from the Essex Design Guide.

(b) Homes England and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership with the support of other partners in Government will support EDG in pursuing these goals, including developing options and actions for all partners to become carbon neutral in respect of their operations by 2030.

(5) The Parties agree that this commitment to working together towards reducing GHG emissions will be implemented through a [sub group](#) of EDG working closely with the Essex Planning Officers

Group and guided by the Essex Climate Action Commission recommendations with the following purposes:

To **develop and promote a series of events / studies and other activities** to assist partners develop their own actions to address climate change and prepare for zero carbon. Initially this will focus on two key areas:

Green skills and re-training harnessing FE and HE colleges and universities in supporting this initiative.

Developing steps to prepare partners for the new Homes Standard in 2025.

Through the EDG partnership, the Charter will seek to showcase best practice pilots and larger scale zero carbon house building schemes and retrofit programmes. Further information will be posted on the Housing Essex website - [Climate Action Topic page](#).

(6) To recognize and support the GHG emission reduction initiatives and the climate change goals outlined in this Charter, Signatory parties are invited seek the support of other organisations in the supply chain to sign up to a statement of their initiatives and commitments.

(8) This Charter is not intended to be legally binding or impose legal obligations on any Party and will have no legal effect, nevertheless, signatories will have confidence that their schemes will broadly comply with ambitions of the county and districts across Essex and are more likely to find favour therefore with planning authorities subject of course to compliance with the local plan and other matters consequent on the normal development management and planning process.

SIGNED on behalf of the EDG by the Chair:

Mark Curle

Date:

SIGNED on behalf of Homes England

Date:

SIGNED on behalf by Essex Planning Officers Association (representing the 15 Councils of Essex):

Date:

SIGNED on behalf of South East Local Enterprise Partnership

Date