

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment v3 - Head of service review

Reference: ECIA575712139

Submitted: 23 January 2024 14:54 PM

Executive summary

Title of policy / decision: Essex Housing Annual Delivery Plan 2024/25

Policy / decision type: Cabinet Decision

Overview of policy / decision: In July 2020, ECC Cabinet agreed to the establishment of a limited liability partnership, Essex Housing Development LLP ((FP-692-05-20) Essex Housing Optimisation Project) to carry out development activity. A five-year Business Plan was approved by Cabinet to outline the LLP's long-term objectives. This set out the blueprint to deliver an ambitious development programme, by building upon the work to date of the existing Essex Housing model.

This decision seeks to agree the Essex Housing Annual Delivery Plan for 24/25 to inform ECC of the LLP's funding requirements. All decisions with regard to development, financing, and land disposal are subject to their own decision-making process.

In addition, this year, a further request is included within this Cabinet Paper to extend the EHLLP working capital loan from £5m to £10m.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: The Cabinet Decision ensures that ECC has oversight of EHLLP activity and capital requirements

The overall Essex Housing programme delivers the following strategic aims of ECC:

- To enable inclusive economic growth
- To help people get the best start and age well
- To help create great places to grow up, live and work
- To transform the council to achieve more with less

Executive Director responsible for policy / decision: Tom Walker (Economy, Investment and Public Health)

Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision: Cllr Lee Scott (Planning a Growing Economy)

Is this a new policy / decision or a change to an existing one?: New policy / decision

How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?: The operation of Essex Housing is overseen by the Essex Housing Board. The Board is responsible for:

- Owning the Essex Housing Business Plan
- Recommending investment decisions to ECC
- Performance management/monitoring
- Overseeing the operation of the LLP
- Reporting to the Shareholder Leads and Cabinet Member

ECC and Seax Trading are invited to (and ECC attends) Board meetings as observers through shareholder leads (Cllr Lesley Wagland and Ben Finlayson). The Board meets circa monthly and also has informal meetings in between Board meetings.

In addition to this, the following further governance measures are in place:

- ECC retains control over the LLP and limits its authority by retaining various Reserved Matters. E.g. ECC approval of decisions with implications over £2m, business plans and new funding requirements.
- Essex Housing attends the Annual Shareholder meeting held with all ECC companies.

An internal audit was undertaken (signed off in April 2022) to evaluate the control design and test the operating effectiveness of key controls around Essex Housing. This audit gave 'Satisfactory Assurance'.

In 2023, EHLLP was reviewed using the Local Authority company governance review framework developed by Local Partnerships and the LLP will be developing and implementing recommendations to ensure best practice governance is followed.

In 2024, the EHLLP will also begin work on a new Business Plan which will consider future commissioning intentions that will shape future Annual Delivery Plans.

Will this policy / decision impact on:

Service users: Yes

Employees: No

Wider community or groups of people: Yes

What strategic priorities will this policy / decision support?: Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy, High Quality Environment, Health, Independence and Wellbeing for All Ages, A good place for Children and Families to Grow

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Economy?: Good jobs, Infrastructure, Future growth and investment, Green growth, Levelling up the economy

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Environment: Net zero, Transport and built environment, Minimise waste, Green communities, Levelling up the environment

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Health: Healthy lifestyles, Promoting independence, Carers, Levelling up health

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families: Family resilience and stability, Levelling up outcomes for families

What geographical areas of Essex will the policy / decision affect?: All Essex

Digital accessibility

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: No

Equalities - Groups with protected characteristics

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Sex

Nature of impact: None

Gender reassignment

Nature of impact: None

Marriage / civil partnership

Nature of impact: None

Pregnancy / maternity

Nature of impact: None

Race

Nature of impact: None

Religion / belief

Nature of impact: None

Sexual orientation

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: In Everyone's Essex, there is a commitment to enable residents to live independently by assisting them to access suitable accommodation, supporting access to employment and meaningful activities, and enabling independence at home through reablement, care technology, and market shaping to ensure strong domiciliary support, and investment in housing. While this decision is not to commence new work, it enables the funding required to be able to deliver previously agreed projects and the current programme includes schemes that deliver Independent Living Schemes for Older People and Specialist Housing for Adults with Learning Disabilities.

NB- There is currently no MH provision dedicated within the programme so it is not possible to assess impact. An MH Spec exists should this provision be something that the EH programme needs to directly provide.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: NA

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Not applicable to this decision as this does not seek new investment or approval of additional projects or activity

Levelling up - Priority areas & cohorts

Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions (taking an all-age approach)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Children on Free School Meals

Nature of impact: None

Working families

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Young adults (16-25 who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Harlow

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Jaywick and Clacton

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Harwich

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Basildon (Town) housing estates

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Canvey Island

Nature of impact: None

Residents of Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Rural North of the Braintree District

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Children and adults with SEND, LD or MH – Over the course of our programme, Essex Housing will deliver a significant programme of housing delivery for the provision of these cohorts as set out in the Annual Delivery Plan. Further schemes are also being identified and a statement of need that has been provided by ECC social care colleagues will underpin the development of new pipeline sites.

Working Families – The overall programme will create a sizable number of jobs and opportunities for working people and businesses in Essex as well as good quality housing for working families which is significant in relation to the investment. This has been classified as low as this decision is related to delivery of the Essex Housing programme only and does not impact on broader strategic intervention to stimulate the local economy and support working families across the County.

Young Adults 16-25 – Previously identified apprenticeship and skills and training opportunities are limited only to Essex Housing schemes. While this is a significant impact in relation to our programme, this decision will not impact on broader opportunities outside of the Essex Housing programme.

Levelling Up Areas - Harlow, Clacton and Colchester – We have identified schemes in each of these localities that will provide significant regeneration opportunities - in Clacton and Colchester this relates to key town centre sites.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: NA

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Not applicable to this decision as this does not seek new investment or approval of additional projects or activity

Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups

Refugees / asylum seekers

Nature of impact: None

Homeless / rough sleepers

Nature of impact: None

People who experience drug and alcohol dependence

Nature of impact: None

Offenders / ex-offenders

Nature of impact: None

Victims of modern slavery

Nature of impact: None

Carers

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Looked after children / care leavers

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

The armed forces community (serving personnel and their families, veterans, reservists and cadets)

Nature of impact: None

People who are unemployed / economically inactive

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People on low income

Nature of impact: None

Sex workers

Nature of impact: None

Ethnic minorities

Nature of impact: None

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities

Nature of impact: None

People with multiple complex needs or multi-morbidities

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: While this decision relates to approval of the delivery plan and each project will be subject to its own governance, the overall Essex Housing programme supports the economy by creating new jobs. The Essex Housing construction procurement approach prioritises bidders that provide apprenticeships and skills and training opportunities on site. The programme includes specialist housing for a variety of cohorts - one such example is a scheme for young people transitioning out of Children's Social Care at Goldlay Square.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: NA

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Not applicable to this decision as this does not seek new investment or approval of additional projects or activity

Equalities - Geographical Groups

People living in areas of high deprivation

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in rural or isolated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in coastal areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in urban areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The overall Essex Housing programme has a significant role to play in place shaping and regenerating areas of intervention. The impact is restricted currently to only those parts of the county that Essex Housing has live schemes in and therefore the impact will grow as the programme and pipeline of projects does. This decision does not seek new investment or approval of additional projects or activity however future decisions will be taken for any new projects identified that meet this need.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: NA

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Not applicable to this decision as this does not seek new investment or approval of additional projects or activity

Families

Family formation (e.g. to become or live as a couple, the ability to live with or apart from children)

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Families going through key transitions e.g. becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities, onset of a long-term health condition

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Families before, during and after couple separation

Nature of impact: None

Families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The impact is unknown on each metric stated above however as per previous sections, the EH programme includes specialist forms of housing that promote independent living with appropriate care arrangements. This has in the past and has the potential in future to support families with their caring responsibilities, such as through key transitions eg. children leaving their parents home as they reach adulthood.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: NA

Crime & Disorder

Crime and disorder

Nature of impact: None

The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances

Nature of impact: None

Re-offending

Nature of impact: None

Serious violence

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:

NA

(If negative impact assessed) What actions will be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts, including timescales:

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

NA

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

Climate

Does your decision / policy involve development or re-development of buildings or infrastructure?: Yes

Have you calculated the predicted operational energy demand and the carbon emissions (both operational and embodied) impact of the development / infrastructure / building?: Yes

Please provide details: While subject to it's own assessment and decision making process, Essex Housing is currently working with Chelmsford City Council as Planning Authority on a scheme of 10 net zero homes. This scheme will consider both operational and embodied carbon to achieve this outcome.

Does your proposal align with the Net Zero Carbon (in operation) definition being promoted through best practice and emerging planning responses at ECC?: Yes

Please provide details: While this decision does not amend existing projects or approve new projects, the Essex Housing Business Plan 20-25 has a clear statement on sustainability which outlines the overall programme approach "Regardless of tenure, Essex Housing works to high quality design standards which promote sustainability and ensure that units are adaptable and are built with the future needs of residents in mind. Essex Housing schemes provide good quality external space, foster community cohesion through public art and communal gardens, and sustainability through having energy efficient designs, often incorporating features such as electric car charging points and solar panels. Essex Housing seeks to work in partnership with planning authorities to bring forward high quality schemes that align with planning policy wherever possible."

The reason for answering yes to this question is because Essex Housing is currently working with Chelmsford City Council as Planning Authority on a scheme of 10 net zero homes. This scheme will be the first of it's kind within the programme although all homes in construction currently will achieve EPC A.

The decision to progress and construct this project is subject to its own governance process and is not part of this decision.

Have you assessed the upfront embodied carbon emissions (building life cycle stages A1-A5) of your proposed project and have you set targets in line with best practice to reduce embodied carbon emissions?: Yes

Please provide details: With specific reference to the Carbon Neutral pilot referenced above, the current ambition is to achieve LETI Small Scale Housing standards. To reduce embodied carbon within this project, the following areas will be considered:

- Extraction of materials
- Transport to manufacturers
- Manufacturing processes
- Transport of materials to site
- Construction practices
- In-use & maintenance
- End-of life - recycling, landfill etc.

The decision to progress and construct this project is subject to its own governance process and is not part of this decision.

Your development needs to be resilient to projected climate risks including flooding, overheating and subsidence. Please outline how you will achieve this: As part of the design process on any scheme, all relevant surveys and assessments are carried out and submitted as part of planning applications.

Does your decision / policy take place in, or make use of, existing buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to transport, travel or vehicles? This includes travel needs / requirements of both service users and staff (including staff you're planning to recruit): No

Are you undertaking a procurement exercise?: No

Does your decision / policy involve the purchase of goods or materials?: Yes

Have you considered making use of goods / materials that already exist in the organisation, or using second-hand equipment?: N/A

Will you purchase goods that are durable and long lasting, and can be easily maintained or repaired?: Yes

Will you source goods / materials from a local provider where possible?: Yes

Will you use goods or materials made with recycled content and / or recyclable at the end of their life?: Yes

Will any waste be generated by this decision? This includes waste from construction, waste generated by service users / staff, and waste generated by replacing existing products / materials with new: Yes

Most of our activities will generate waste so it is important that this waste is managed properly. Generally, the more waste produced the greater the greenhouse gas impact. What approaches are in place to maximise reuse, recycling and composting of any waste generated by this decision? Please specify how you are:

Measuring the amount of waste being generated and setting targets to reduce, for example setting reuse requirements: This decision has a very indirect impact on waste with each individual scheme subject to its own governance and own considerations. Across the programme, Essex Housing ensure that environmental considerations are taken into account when procuring contractors and seek to promote sustainable development that reduces the impact on the environment

Requiring recycling - such as setting targets for waste recycled, or providing facilities to recycle: As above

Operating the service in a digital way to reduce use of material resources: NA

Sharing goods and services with others to reduce resource use: NA

Donating or selling materials and products that are no longer required to keep them in use elsewhere: NA

Avoiding over-packaged or difficult to recycle goods: As above

Avoid single-use items, in particular single use plastic: As Above

Recycling and composting waste where applicable: As Above

Where will waste be treated and disposed of? This includes general rubbish and recycling: NA for this decision.

Nature of impact

Built Environment / Energy: Positive

Sustainable Transport / Travel: Positive

Waste: Negative

Extent of impact

Built Environment / Energy: Low

Sustainable Transport / Travel: Low

Waste: Low

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: While each scheme is subject to its own assessment, the overall programme benefits the built environment by developing in a sensitive way and including sustainable measures on sites such as EV charging, solar panels, heat pumps as well as a scheme of net zero homes. Essex Housing also seek to achieve biodiversity net gain and provide good quality public open space for residents to obtain the benefits of being outdoors.

What actions will be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts, including timescales?: While each scheme is subject to its own assessment, the overall programme includes schemes with EV car charging points across its developments. The design process takes into account local transport links to ensure connectivity with local bus and train terminals. Site permeability and linkage to footpaths and cycling routes are also considered as part of the design process and cycle shelters are provided on each private housing scheme.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: This decision has a very indirect impact on waste with each individual scheme subject to its own governance and own considerations. Across the programme, Essex Housing ensure that environmental considerations are taken into account when procuring contractors and seek to promote sustainable development that reduces the impact on the environment

Procurement process includes reference to sustainability and contractors will be prioritised in relation to how they dispose of waste. The construction industry has made great progress nationally in reducing the amount of waste produced and we have schemes on site with contractors that have 100% recycling record of excess materials.

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your ECIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more of the groups / areas identified?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date ECIA completed: 09/01/2024

Name of person completing the ECIA: Daniel Taylor

Email address of person completing the ECIA: Dan.taylor@essex-housing.co.uk

Your function: Economy, Investment and Public Health

Your service area: Essex Housing

Your team: Essex Housing

Are you submitting this ECIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: gwyn.owen@essex-housing.co.uk