

Essex County Council – Essex Design Guide and BRE’s Home Quality Mark

Challenges

Essex is a county of many challenges. With the need to plan for 180,000 new homes, high land and house prices, a focus on housing numbers rather than creating great places and has led to some developments being completed at both high financial cost at the expense of quality.

This is of great concern as it prevents the creation of high-quality, balanced communities for people to enjoy, live and work in. And it was recognised that this was also increasingly resulting insufficient infrastructure and affordable housing requirements being properly addressed. And this lack of focus on place making to secure the right levels of infrastructure is also increasing turning local communities against new developments and economic growth.

In 2016 a dual agenda was initiated to bring about change and deliver good quality development. It was recognised that changes to the operating system in Essex needed to be made. It was also recognised that Essex has the legacy of the Essex Design Guide (EDG) which has pioneered local design, creating space for innovation and encouraging high-quality development. The EDG has always been about more than architecture – it is about creating distinctive places that people want to live, building communities and making sure that the infrastructure and facilities are in place at the right time. Since the first iteration of the Guide it has gained both national and international recognition and today the Guide is still regarded as required reading for those responsible for designing new communities.



Advisory



Data



Research



Tools

Solution

The EDG was produced collaboratively, led by Essex County Council and the Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) working with 30 different partner organisations including BRE. Whilst some housebuilders are working to produce good quality homes, the County Council and EPOA are working with BRE to embed the Home Quality Mark (HQM) as a means to recognise quality.



Developed by BRE, one of the world’s leading building science centres, and a range of industry partners, HQM is the national quality mark for homes, giving consumers a better choice for a healthier, smarter and more sustainable new home. HQM does this by providing impartial information on a new home’s quality. It will indicate to householders the overall expected running costs, health and wellbeing benefits, and the environmental footprint associated with living in the home. It will also highlight benefits such as access to local amenities and the quality of the local neighbourhood.

For housebuilders, HQM provides robust, third party certification of the quality of a new home, enabling you to communicate to potential buyers. For investors, lenders, insurers and planners, HQM provides a benchmark of quality, managing and reducing risk over the long-term. For consumers, HQM provides a trusted mark of quality.

“Moving the quality agenda forward in Essex is very important to ensuring we can create great places and quality new developments. It has been invaluable to work with BRE on this journey and in shaping the Essex Design Guide. BRE have brought good insight and knowledge, and through HQM we see this as being really important to helping to drive up quality standards. HQM also provides local people with the ability to differentiate the quality of the new homes built.”

Graham Thomas, Chairman of the Essex Planning Officers Association

Trusted expertise you can build on

Benefits

HQM is a holistic standard for new housing development that supports the delivery of high quality and better performing homes, that are good for people, places and the environment. HQM's quality indicators and consumer focus is an ideal fit for the EDG, helping to communicate the benefits of more sustainable development to all stakeholders – planners, developers, members of the public and others.

HQM is helping Essex County Council and the EPOA communicate the value of quality in homes and establish a platform at county level which provides the basis for local planning authorities to drive implementation. HQM provides an established framework whereby Essex can continue to promote high quality development whilst providing space for innovation.

For more information on EDG go to www.essexdesignguide.co.uk . For HQM go to www.homequalitymark.com.

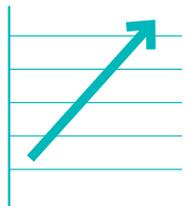


180,000
new homes

Required in
Greater Essex
by 2036

25% of the pop.
of Gtr Essex will be
65 yrs+ by 2036

New homes need to reflect
this market requirement



At least
8 new
settlements

Delivered at scale,
to TCPA Garden
Communities
standards

UK+

Top destination for
culture, innovation
& character



Get in touch

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