East of England
All Party Parliamentary Group

FAO The Rt Hon Steve Reed MP
Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Dear Secretary of State,

Unlocking Housing Delivery and Economic Growth in the East of England

We are writing on behalf of partners across the East of England to set out the scale of housing need in the region, the progress that is being made, and the conditions required to ensure the East can continue to play its full role in delivering the Government's housing mission and supporting national economic growth.

The East of England is expected to deliver more than 227,000 new homes during this Parliament, a level of ambition surpassed only by London and the South East. This reflects rapid population growth, an ageing demographic and long-standing affordability pressures affecting rural, coastal and urban communities alike. Meanwhile more than 94,000 households are currently on local authority housing registers and over 9,000 households are living in temporary accommodation. Housing conditions are increasingly shaping health, education, employment and productivity outcomes, with clear implications for long-term economic resilience.

The region's delivery responsibilities are particularly striking given that the East contributes more in tax per person than it receives in public spending, while also being required to meet one of the highest housing targets in the country. ***Aligning housing delivery with transport, skills, land and environmental policy is therefore essential if this growth is to be sustainable and deliver value for money for the taxpayer.***

While the Government has rightly emphasised strategic, place-based delivery, the East of England currently has no Established Mayoral Strategic Authorities (EMSAs). With devolution arrangements still in transition across much of the region, housing and infrastructure delivery relies on coordination between individual councils, voluntary partnerships and regional bodies, without the streamlined mechanisms available elsewhere. This makes effective partnership with central government all the more important.

Despite these challenges, the region continues to deliver at scale. More than 28,600 homes were completed last year, including over 7,000 affordable homes, with encouraging increases in social rent delivery in several areas. Recent Government action – including investment in planning capacity, simplification of national planning policy and the ambition to support higher-density development around transport hubs – is welcomed and provides a stronger platform for delivery. However, the pace at

which housing and sustainable transport are being aligned on the ground remains slower than is needed to meet demand.

Transport capacity remains one of the most significant constraints on housing delivery. Strategic road and rail pinch points across the region – including the A12, A47, A1 and key rail junctions at Ely, Haughley and Trowse Bridge – are limiting the ability of local authorities to bring forward planned housing and employment sites. The cancellation or review of critical schemes risks undermining Local Plans and could significantly reduce the number of homes delivered over the coming decades. A stable and credible pipeline of strategic transport investment is therefore fundamental to unlocking growth.

The Government's commitment to East West Rail is a clear example of how infrastructure-first approaches can support housing and economic growth, including through opportunities such as a new town at Tempsford and improved east-west connectivity. However to maximise the benefits of such investment, significant upfront infrastructure funding and exemplary spatial planning will be required, alongside careful management of impacts on already constrained corridors such as the A1.

Across councils and delivery partners, four conditions consistently emerge as critical to accelerating housing delivery in the East of England:

- prioritising partners with the capacity to deliver early and at scale, supported by multi-year funding certainty;
- ***funding places rather than homes alone, aligning investment with transport, regeneration, decarbonisation and town-centre renewal;***
- providing policy tools to unblock delivery, including streamlined planning, environmental assessment and Section 106 processes; and
- ensuring the region receives a fair share of the £39 billion Social and Affordable Homes Programme, with a strong emphasis on social rent.

In the absence of EMSAs, strengthened regional coordination through strategic partnerships, Homes England regional team and local authority groupings will be essential. The East of England Housing Delivery Group, chaired by Alice Macdonald MP and supported by Local Government East, brings together councils, housing associations, infrastructure bodies and government partners, and stands ready to work closely with MHCLG to help deliver the Government's ambitions.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how national policy, funding and infrastructure investment can best support the East of England to meet its housing targets, relieve acute affordability pressures and continue to contribute strongly to the UK's economic success. Please ask your officials to liaise with Steve Barwick of the EE APPG Secretariat – who has sent this letter on our behalf - regarding the date of any meeting. ***Please also note this letter is being copied to the Transport Secretary for her comments given the critical role of transport infrastructure to the delivery of the Government's housing ambition***.

Yours sincerely,

Jess Asato MP
Co-chair, East of England APPG

Pam Cox MP
Co-chair, East of England APPG

Marie Goldman MP
Vice Chair, East of England APPG

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