

Higgins Group

EssexWorks.

case study



construction sector

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Paul Lewellen,
Finance Director

INVEST
Essex



Essex County Council

Higgins Group

award-winning homebuilders

Higgins Group PLC is one of the South East's largest privately-owned construction companies with a turnover in excess of £225 million in 2008/9. A family-owned business founded in 1965, it has its headquarters at Loughton in Essex and builds or refurbishes homes throughout Essex, London and the Home Counties. Many of its projects have been recognised by industry and consumer awards. In 2008, for example, Higgins Homes won two bronze awards in the coveted "What House?" Awards in the Best Medium Housebuilder and Best Partnership Development categories.

The company designs and constructs a wide range of residential properties, including new build and property conversions, from starter apartments or houses to large, luxury detached properties. However, community housing continues to form a large proportion of Higgins' output as Finance Director Paul Lewellen explains. "Building and

refurbishment for local authorities and housing associations has been the foundation of our business and it still represents about two thirds of our work. It gives us the opportunity to train local people in building trades and return skills to the community."

The Higgins Group is also taking a lead role in designing and building "green" homes using innovative materials and construction techniques. "We have been building to high standards designed to reduce carbon emissions for some time," says Paul Lewellen. "Creating contemporary, high quality and environmentally friendly housing at affordable prices is not an easy task, but we are achieving this on a number of our projects."

Location in Essex has proved important to the company's operations, according to Paul Lewellen. "We are located right on the edge of London, the biggest contracting market in the UK. Being so close to the M11 and M25 motorways is a major advantage in providing our site management teams with good access to our developments."

From a recruitment and training perspective, Essex offers real benefits. "Although we recruit general labour from areas close to our developments, many of our site management teams are drawn from the Essex area. The county also provides a large element of our specialist subcontractors and other members of our supply chain," says Paul Lewellen.

"We have a good relationship with Anglia Ruskin University who run courses in building management and surveying. By providing work experience to local schools and sponsoring students through courses we have been able to develop and maintain a well-trained site management team."

Essex remains a strong growth area for the company. New sites are coming on stream in the Coggeshall area and around London Stansted Airport with further potential stimulated by the Governments housing targets.

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INVEST Essex provides confidential advice and practical support to companies wanting to establish a presence or expand in the UK. We promote Essex as an outstanding business destination and help existing and potential investors make the most of our strategic location, thriving business environment, and quality of life.

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