



Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Board

APPROVED Minutes of the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Board Meeting held in Sunderland Room, Innovation Centre Medway, on 10th December 2019 commencing at 4.30pm

Present:

Board members and observers

Rob Bennett, BBP Regeneration / SQW (Chair, RB)
Cllr Monique Bonney, Swale Borough Council (MB)
Cllr John Burden, Gravesham Borough Council (JB)
Cllr Martin Cox, Maidstone Borough Council (MC)
Cllr Mike Whiting, Kent County Council (MD)
Cllr Alan Jarrett, Medway Council (AJ)
Cllr Jeremy Kite, Dartford Borough Council (JK)
Daniel Ghinn, Creation Interactive Ltd (DG)
Robert Goodman, Land Securities/Bluewater (RG)
Ian Piper, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (IP)
Ann Komzolik, North Kent College (AK)
Sally Harvey, Environment Agency (SH)

Also present:

Alison Broom, Maidstone Borough Council (AB)
Neil Davies, Medway Council (ND)
Lucy Druesne, University of Kent (for Carole Barron)
David Hughes, Gravesham Borough Council (DH)
Richard Longman, TGKP (RL)
Matthew Norwell, TGKP (MN)
David Smith, Kent County Council (DS)
Emma Wiggins, Swale Borough Council (EW)

Guests:

Prof Chris Holland, Kent & Medway Medical School
Richard Collins, Kent & Medway Medical School
Kate Willard, Thames Estuary Envoy

Apologies:

Cllr John Burden, Gravesham BC
Kamal Aggarwal, Thomson, Snell and Passmore
Mark Heeley, Tarmac
Shona Johnstone, Homes England
Graham Harris, Dartford Borough Council

Paul Jackson, Dovetail Games
Carole Barron, University of Kent
Iain McNab, BEIS
Adam Bryan, South East LEP
Rehman Chishti, Member of Parliament

Action

Item 1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1. The Chairman welcomed Board Members, Observers, Officers and Guests, in particular Cllr Mike Whiting on behalf of KCC, Sally Harvey from the Environment Agency, Chris Holland and Richard Collins for item 3, and Kate Willard for item 4.

Item 2. Minutes of TGKP Board Meeting of 10th October 2019 and matters arising – TGKP 191210(1)

- 2.1. The Minutes were agreed. On matters arising not on the agenda:
- 2.1.1. RL would be circulating to colleagues a draft TGKP response to Transport for the South East's consultation on their draft Transport Strategy for clearance by 10 January.

RL

Item 3. Kent & Medway Medical School: the wider economic impact and opportunities – Prof Chris Holland, Founding Dean, and Dr Richard Collins

- 3.1. Chris Holland spoke about the impact medical schools can have on the wider economy, with a 'halo' effect including drawing in research funding and attracting in-migration of clinical expertise seeking opportunities to pursue research and entrepreneurship beyond their core clinical practice. This was particularly on the agenda for younger practitioners, looking at flexible portfolio careers rather than full-time general practice. There were signs this was already happening in Kent & Medway in anticipation of Kent & Medway Medical

School (KMMS).

- 3.2. Nationally there is a shortage of GPs, a situation set to worsen as a large cohort approach retirement (or take early retirement). This is acutely felt in some parts of Kent. Currently London-based medical schools export a lot of their graduates to the north, and it has been hard to attract them to areas of the South East which are relatively expensive but have significant pockets of multiple deprivation including on indicators around health and access to healthcare. KMMS therefore aspires to be the main provider of new clinicians in the Thames Estuary / Kent & Medway area. Its aim is to provide students with a good experience (academically, clinically and socially) that encourages them to stay in the area after qualification, or to return in future for more advanced training. The “60/20/20 Rule” generally applies to medical students: 60% of them stay for 20 years within 20 miles of where they did their training. The presence of KMMS and clustering with life-science, digital and data-driven businesses will help accelerate progression of medical and healthcare from R&D into clinical practice. There is also a direct economic benefit to Kent & Medway, across employment sectors, from having improved health infrastructure that supports a healthier workforce.
- 3.3. Establishing KMMS is expensive. The two universities are each needing to find around £50m and there is no seed-funding from Government. They are actively seeking other sources of funding – including endowments, bursaries for students, philanthropy and sponsorship (including, for example, naming rights of facilities). At this point in time around half the required funding has been secured.
- 3.4. In discussion the following points were made:
 - KMMS will be seeking to ensure that general practice and mental health training pathways are held in similar esteem to other clinical areas.
 - The facilities at KMMS are designed to be fit for post-graduate programmes though the initial student cohort will be undergraduate only.
 - KMMS will not itself provide direct clinical services to the local population, but experience from other medical schools is that their presence drives up standards of clinical practice and care. Students would be expected to be advocates of good practice. For clinical practice placements KMMS will be negotiating with Primary Care Networks rather than individual practices.
 - There is a tariff that accompanies medical students that could be leveraged, for example, as a revenue stream against which to borrow to provide student accommodation. There might be scope for pooling a portion of CIL to fund bursaries, or for local authorities to sponsor bursaries for students who are local residents (Medway has offered one such bursary).
 - KMMS is charged with widening participation, particularly in terms of socio-economic background, in its intake: medicine tends to be dominated by people from households with a professional/managerial background. Engineering this change has to start at primary school stage.
 - Chris Holland intends that KMMS will take a very positive approach to intercalation, where after their initial 3 years of training students may broaden their training by further study in a related field (e.g. MBA in Health Administration, Exercise Science, Biochemistry etc). The downside of this can be the added financial burden on top of already significant student debt. Chris is interested to see more opportunities opened up for intercalation working in industry (whether life science, genomics, big data or whatever) where graduates would be properly paid, placements would deliver mutual

benefit to employer and student alike, and debt burden would be eased. Intercalation can also help ‘rescue’ students who are hesitant about continuing and motivate them to complete their training.

- KMMS is keen to engage with the business community straight away. They are a conduit to an enormous digitised health database, ethically controlled. Another driver for KMMS, and the health sector generally, is gearing up for a digital future¹. They are also mindful of the Government’s call for more candidate Academic Health and Science Centres. This might be a longer-term aspiration on the back of KMMS but they wanted to take an approach that puts the building blocks in place.

3.5. In summarising ways that TGKP and partners could assist, **the Board agreed:**

3.5.1. **We should investigate the scope to use recycled TIGER/Kent & Medway Business Fund resources creatively to support the development of medtech / life-science / digital sector engagement with the KMMS agenda;**

MN &
KCC

3.5.2. **All partners should seek to be advocates for KMMS through our own networks and other partnerships;**

ALL

3.5.3. **TGKP (through MN) should maintain contact with KMMS and follow up the suggestions above.**

MN

Item 4. Thames Estuary (Background Note – TGKP 191210(2))

4.1. The Chairman welcomed the new Thames Estuary Envoy, Kate Willard and invited her to describe her role and her thinking about the new Thames Estuary Growth Board (TEGB).

4.2. Kate gave a quick summary of her own professional background and extensive non-executive experience. The Envoy role was one she was delighted to get and she looked forward to getting up to speed on North Kent and East London to match her familiarity already with South Essex. She intends to lead by listening and wants the TEGB to do likewise to ensure that shared priorities are well understood.

4.3. The TEGB will meet for the first time on 18 December. Its public sector members provide the core foundation and Kate will be looking to build on those foundations to draw upon private sector and other stakeholder expertise and perspectives. Kate was clear about the principles that should guide the TEGB’s approach: it should not duplicate, interfere or do ill-thought-out activity; it should add value, enhance things that are happening already and focus on issues that need help to get them ‘over the line’. This might include initiatives that need critical mass that can be mobilised at Thames Estuary level. Kate has a particular interest in focusing on the potential of the river itself: this is both a barrier and an opportunity, with much promise in terms of connectivity for people, movement of freight, green energy and environmental enhancement.

4.4. The following points were raised in discussion:

- The Envoy and TEGB might help secure solution-focused engagement with government agencies such as Highways England, and promote a culture that helps pre-empt obstacles arising where local partners are trying to deliver on government priorities.
- There may be a need to recalibrate estuary partners’ relationship with central Government and its agencies, starting as we mean to go on.
- The TEGB’s work needs to be soundly evidence-based and schemes it champions need to be commercially robust.

¹ <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/topol-review>

- North Kent, and other parts of the Thames Estuary, have a good track record of delivery (on housing, jobs, skills) even though much more progress is needed. The new chapter that starts with the Envoy and TEGB is an opportunity to build a positive reputation and to be less cautious and risk-averse than we have been in the past.
- KW wants to look at skills and sectoral gaps around the TEGB table – for instance, innovation in funding and financing – and find the right calibre people to bring what is needed.
- MB emphasised the importance of ensuring no conflict of interest arose between KW’s ‘day job’ with Stobarts and any Envoy-related activity looking at freight and waste-to-energy issues in the Estuary.
- TEGB’s ways of working should be accountable and transparent. It should not back away from difficult issues but should aim to secure consensus. Kate would like to publish a work programme and schedule of activity in the spring of 2020.
- In terms of support for the Envoy role, Kate would work with MN and counterparts in Opportunity South Essex and Local London in the first instance.
- Kate would want TEGB working to unlock significant additional funds into the Thames Estuary area (e.g. £400m-£500m) to do things properly.
- The TGKP Board saw some clear candidates to be TEBG priorities, including Lower Thames Crossing, C2E, and skills (especially in coastal communities). There was a bundle of other issues that significantly affected the sustainability of growth, including air quality and its impact on health and life expectancy.
- The environment of the Estuary was a key part of its offer: work such as the Natural Capital analysis would help identify ways to enhance the environment including testing whether a ‘Great Thames Park’ had any value as a concept.
- The Thames Estuary Production Corridor could be a key building block in developing the narrative and branding of the Estuary as a place people will want to come to, invest and remain. There could be useful lessons in the approach taken in the Arts Council’s draft 10-year Strategy.

4.5. The Chairman thanked Kate for attending the Board meeting and looked forward to working with her and the Thames Estuary Growth Board in the months and years ahead.

Item 5. TGKP Work Programme TGKP - 191210(3)

- 5.1. The paper was taken as read. On points emerging (and some reflecting back on the previous two items), the Board **agreed** that there was a strong appetite to get the Kent & Medway Business Fund working better and more focused on the Board’s priorities and identified opportunities. **Action: Officers (led by MN and DS) were mandated to explore this further and bring back options to a future meeting.**
- 5.2. AJ expressed some words of caution about the Natural Capital study (which is led by MHCLG but all North Kent partners have an interest in its outcomes). The Estuary environment has a unique character and it was important that ‘enhancement’ such as promoting greater public access did not end up destroying the very elements that gave it value in the first place.
- 5.3. MB supported the idea that a focus on Town Centres should be a priority in the TGKP Work Programme. She reported that Swale had reservations about the Lower Thames Crossing if complementary measures across the network were not also secured.

MN,
DS

Item 6. AOB

- 6.1. JK mentioned that he had been approached about trying to stay the demolition of the chimney at Littlebrook Power Station to see if alternative proposals for its future could be explored. The Board **agreed** that MN should write a letter on the Board's behalf urging a pause in demolition proceedings.
- 6.2. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6.00pm, followed immediately by the AGM.

MN

TGKP, December 2019