

APPROVED Minutes of the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Board Meeting held in Sunderland Room, Innovation Centre Medway, on 10 October 2019 commencing at 2.30pm.

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 Mark Dance, Kent County Council (MD)
 Cllr Alan Jarrett, Medway Council (AJ)
 Cllr Jeremy Kite, Dartford Borough Council (JK)
 Kamal Aggarwal, Thomson, Snell and Passmore
 Daniel Ghinn, Creation Interactive Ltd
 Robert Goodman, Land Securities/Bluewater (RG)
 Mark Heeley, Tarmac (MH)
 Carole Barron, University of Kent (CB)
 Shona Johnstone, Homes England (SJ)
 Ann Komzolik, North Kent College (AK)

Also present:

William Cornall, Maidstone BC (WC)
 Neil Davies, Medway Council (ND)
 Richard Hicks, Medway Council (RH)
 Johanna Howarth, Kent County Council (JH)
 Richard Longman, TGKP (RL)
 Iain McNab, BEIS (IMcN)
 Matthew Norwell, TGKP (MN)
 Sarah Nurden, Kent County Council (SN)
 David Smith, Kent County Council (DS)
 Emma Wiggins, Swale Borough Council (EW)
 David Manning, Lower Thames Crossing (DM)
 Sam Stopp, Lower Thames Crossing (SS)

Apologies:

Alison Broom, Maidstone Borough Council
 Adam Bryan, South East LEP
 Rehman Chishti, Member of Parliament
 Graham Harris, Dartford Borough Council

David Hughes, Gravesham Borough Council (DH)
 Paul Jackson, Dovetail Games
 Richard Penn, Environment Agency
 Ian Piper, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (IP)

Action

Item 1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1. The Chairman welcomed Board Members, Observers, Officers and Guests, in particular Richard Hicks for item 3, David Manning and Sam Stopp for item 4 and Sarah Nurden and Johanna Howarth for item 7.

Item 2. Minutes of the Board meeting held on 3rd June 2019 (TGKP 191010(1))

- 2.1. The Minutes were agreed. On matters arising:
- 2.1.1. Para 3.3 The Chairman had duly written to the Secretary of State about the Government's response to the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission report, copied to Board Members. No reply had been received to date.
- 2.1.2. Para 4.1.1 DS advised the Board that Kent CC had confirmed its £90k funding contribution to TGKP for 2019/20. Arrangements for payment were in hand.
- 2.1.3. Para 4.1.2 The arrangements for Vice Chairmanship would be dealt with at the December Board meeting.

Item 3. Presentation – Medway Council's bid to be 2025 UK City of Culture – Richard Hicks, Deputy Chief Executive, Medway Council

- 3.1. RH gave a presentation setting out Medway's ambitions to bid for City of Culture 2025. The initiative had come from Medway's Place Board as part of the broader 'Medway on the map' strategy. Reflecting its aim to be inclusive and people-focused, the bid had been launched at a community event, and later at a Parliamentary reception. The Council was encouraged by other partners coming on board (e.g. Kent Downs AONB). There were many strategic elements and assets around which to develop the bid, including the Medway 2035 regeneration strategy, Dickens 150 celebrations (2020), HS1 connectivity and the presence of four universities. The Council was alive to the wider North Kent dimension and particularly the strategic fit of a City of Culture at the heart of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor. They were seeking partners' support to back the bid and to be advocates for it.
- 3.2. In discussion and responding to questions the following points were noted:
- The City of Culture bidding process would be highly competitive, and the known candidates were very different. It was important to promote one's own bid without denigrating any competitors.
 - Like previous and current candidates, Medway was not the 'finished article'. It faces many social and physical regeneration challenges. Part of City of Culture is about helping to address some of those challenges.
 - Whilst there would be some direct investment in physical assets, this was not the main thrust of the bid (i.e. no 'flagship' building was proposed). The underpinning principle was inclusion and growth for all.
 - Homes England's support would be particularly welcome in getting Medway's HIF bid on Hoo Peninsula over the line (this is an integral part of Medway's wider regeneration strategy).
 - Neighbouring councils confirmed their willingness to give visible support to the bid, recognising that benefits would spread beyond Medway's boundary.
 - It would likewise be important for Medway to demonstrate how it was thinking about the impact and legacy beyond its boundary. One lesson from past successful bids was how they visibly adopted a regional or sub-regional approach and worked with a wide range of partners including, in Coventry's case, moving the development of the bid and subsequent programme out of the council itself.
 - At the same time as working collaboratively, it was important for the bid to have a clear nucleus around which the proposals were structured.
 - A successful bid would attract some direct funding from Government (including Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund), but experience elsewhere was that City of Culture status was a catalyst for attracting and aligning other investments, both public and private sector.
 - Both the bid process and the award, if successful, were opportunities to raise aspiration and engagement of young people across Medway and North Kent.
- 3.3. The Board confirmed its backing in principle for the bid. AJ said that Medway would do more work on shaping what formalised support might look like, taking lessons from the experiences in Hull and Coventry and how they built wider geographic engagement. **Action: Richard Hicks.** The Chair suggested that there should be a strong focus on the longer term legacy and benefits. The Chair thanked Richard for his presentation and the Board looked forward to further engagement as things develop.

Item 4. Presentation – Lower Thames Crossing – David Manning, LTC

- 4.1. David Manning gave a presentation on the progress of preparations for the Development Consent Order for LTC and its delivery. He emphasised that, provided they keep to the current timetable, they are 26 months away from awarding main contracts for the Crossing. It is therefore vital to mobilise the local supply chains and skilled workforce that will be needed, which also provides major opportunities for Kent & Medway to reap economic benefit and legacy from the project. DM also emphasised that LTC still needs advocacy to secure Government investment: it is not yet a done deal. In headline terms the business case remains strong, driven by forecast volumes of HGVs in particular; and the cost envelope of £5.3-£6.8bn was unchanged. Public consultation had shown increased support both for the need and location of LTC. However, Highways England would be re-consulting on a limited range of changes being developed to mitigate impacts including sustainability and net biodiversity.
- 4.2. The construction works would be let in three packages: Tilbury to M25; tunnel and ramps; and A2/M2. These might be encompassed by a single contractor but procurement would be designed to enable different lead contractors for each package. The contracts would be designed to run for 5 years beyond opening before handing over to a long-term operator to ensure the asset was performing well. On skills the LTC would need a diverse range of disciplines and would be able to offer many career opportunities at all levels, including a lot of apprenticeships. LTC were working with the not-for-profit Supply Chain Sustainability School to provide training to SMEs to be procurement-ready. The project offered great opportunities for supply chain SMEs to grow their businesses.
- 4.3. In the subsequent Q&A the following points were noted:
- LTC could generate around 2,000-2,500 on-site jobs and a similar number off-site. Around one-third of these could be on the Kent side. There was already a shortage of labour with relevant skills, and LTC faced likely competition for labour from Heathrow expansion, Crossrail2, London Resort and other schemes. Already contractors were attracting skilled labour from beyond the EU (e.g. Singapore). A key social good that LTC could stimulate, with help from local partners and organisations, was upskilling the existing workforce.
 - HE would be trying to maximise re-use of spoil within the scheme itself, e.g. raised bunds on top of embankments to provide natural screening. Some was likely to go for conventional land remediation schemes but HE would welcome imaginative proposals for landscape schemes. The material south of the Thames was good quality; on the north it was more alluvial and difficult to re-use.
 - It was disappointing that LTC was not going to be multi-modal, particularly to help get freight off the road and onto rail: the Department for Transport seems to struggle conceptually with multi-modal propositions. But the Growth Commission's recommendation about looking in the long term at a multi-modal corridor further east might enable this to be explored outside this scheme.
 - DM acknowledged concerns about pressures elsewhere on the strategic and major roads network, particularly the A249/M2 and other pinch-points en route to the Channel Ports. HE have commissioned work on what is needed across the wider network, most likely for funding during the RIS3&4 cycles but with potential for some measures to be prioritised in RIS2.
- 4.4. In conclusion, the Board noted the need to continue advocacy for LTC and for partners to use their networks, including MPs and business groups, to impress on the Government the

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importance of funding LTC. Partners should also use their networks to spread awareness of supply chain and skills training opportunities. The Chairman thanked David and Sam for attending and looked forward to continued engagement as the scheme progresses.

ALL

Item 5. Thames Estuary matters – TGKP 191010(2)

5.1. MN led the Board through his paper. Interviews for the Thames Estuary Envoy were taking place on 11 October. Once the Envoy was appointed we would try to arrange an early meeting with North Kent partners and ensure suitable introductions to the North Kent area.

5.2. The initial make-up of the Growth Board was agreed; a first meeting would be arranged, hopefully in November, when the Board would consider its priorities. JK commented that the Growth Board should focus on communication and advocacy. AJ wanted to ensure that the Growth Board did not seize upon the less credible elements of the Growth Commission's report. MH queried how the private sector 'voice' would be articulated, given that Kent's delegates were all from the public sector. It was noted that there was private sector representation on the Essex side, but there was an obligation on Growth Board members to ensure they reached out to the private sector and wider civil society. It was intended that there should be a larger forum created to capture the full range of stakeholder voices. The Chairman invited all Board Members to put forward their own thoughts on what the Growth Board's priorities might be that met the test of pan-Estuary significance. **Action: any inputs to be sent to Matthew Norwell.**

ALL

5.3. The discussion also touched on continuing concern about the Government's expectations of ambitious housing growth in the Estuary against a backdrop of under-provision of infrastructure – not just transport but also primary and secondary health and social care. Partners should use appropriate means and opportunities to reinforce that message to Government.

5.4. ND advised the Board that, subject to agreement from London and Essex colleagues, Medway Council was willing to act as Accountable Body for the funding committed by Government to support the Envoy and Growth Board.

ND

Item 6. TGKP Workplan

6.1. MN and RL gave a quick progress report on elements of the team's current work programme.

- Thames Estuary Production Corridor. A "Vision to Action" document was published in September; a more detailed investment document is to follow. "Creative Estuary" is leading the TEPC work in Kent and Essex. Some of the tangible outputs will include the Estuary 2020 Festival and exploring use of public assets for cultural production, including feasibility work on the *Docking Station* at Chatham Maritime.
- C2E. Officers were working to resolve issues, mainly emanating from Department for Transport, over the objectives and scope of the project, in order to finalise a memorandum of understanding and funding agreement to get the study project underway.
- Natural Capital. MHCLG are tendering for consultants to carry out a Natural Capital Analysis of the Thames Estuary, including the potential for a Great Thames Park. We would be trying to ensure local knowledge and expertise were engaged in an appropriate manner.
- Resilient Infrastructure. The Strength In Places Fund bid had been submitted on time; we now awaited the outcome of the Assessment Panel which would not be known

until March 2020. If that is successful we will bring a more detailed briefing to a future Board meeting.

Item 7. Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) – Presentation by Sarah Nurden

- 7.1. SN distilled some key slides from SELEP’s stakeholder engagement pack to set the context for discussion. All Local Enterprise Partnerships were charged with producing a LIS, co-designed with central Government to complement the 2017 National Industrial Strategy. This would not be a bidding document but would inform future funding decisions and monitoring of the area’s economic performance. An evidence base had been prepared by consultants (Lichfields and Deyton Bell); SELEP were now embarking on drafting alongside various consultative stakeholder workshops. The first draft would be in December with further iterations up to a final version in March 2020.
- 7.2. The initial evidence findings told a story of over-representation in less productive sectors and vice versa. R&D spending both in industry and universities was well below national averages and far below the best performing. CB commented that this finding was not unwelcome because it highlighted the extent to which South East universities were losing out, particularly on Government-funded R&D programmes, to institutions elsewhere in the country.
- 7.3. In discussion, JK queried whether the LIS evidence matched what was coming through work on the Kent & Medway Enterprise and Productivity Strategy (EPS). JH advised that there were differences of detail but the overall thrust reinforced the need to look at long-standing productivity challenges and the main opportunities for growth. JK was concerned that the LIS evidence, looking at the level of SELEP geography, misrepresented North Kent; it was acknowledged that tools such as SIC Codes are not always helpful to get meaningful analysis. DS commented that the work on the EPS means KCC has a better grasp of the characteristics of the Kent & Medway economy and where the EPS should focus. JH confirmed that she was willing to help the SELEP team in writing the Kent & Medway aspects of the LIS, and was engaging with North Kent partners and other stakeholders also on the draft of the EPS. This would itself be brought to a future Board meeting. The Chairman thanked Sarah and Johanna for their input and suggested that the New Thames Estuary Envoy should be thoroughly briefed on this.

JH

Item 8. AOB

- 8.1. RL drew attention to a letter from the Head of Rail Business Development at HS1 seeking support in making the case to Government for investment in high-speed rolling stock in whatever arrangements replace the cancelled South East Rail franchise competition. The Board agreed that the Chairman should write in support of this message. **Action: RL to draft for RB.**
- 8.2. RL also highlighted publication of Transport for the South East’s draft regional transport strategy and a programme of roadshow events. This was an important document and the Board agreed that TGKP should respond to the consultation. **Action: RL would prepare advice for the next Board meeting in December.**
- 8.3. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4.30pm.

RL

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