

## Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Board

APPROVED Minutes of the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Board Meeting held in the Darwin Room, Innovation Centre Medway, on 13 December 2018.

### Present:

#### Board members and observers

Rob Bennett, BBP Regeneration (Chair) RB  
 Cllr Andrew Bowles, Swale Borough Council AB  
 Cllr Rodney Chambers, Medway Council RC  
 Cllr Martin Cox, Maidstone Borough Council MC  
 Cllr Mark Dance, Kent County Council MD  
 Cllr David Turner, Gravesham Borough Council DT  
 Mark Heeley, Tarmac MH  
 Ian Piper, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation IP  
 Ann Komzolik, North Kent College AK  
 Carole Barron, University of Kent CB

### Also present:

Alison Broom, Maidstone Borough Council ABr  
 Kevin Burbidge, Gravesham Borough Council KB  
 Council (deputizing for David Hughes)  
 David Godfrey, Kent County Council DG  
 Graham Harris, Dartford Borough Council GH  
 Richard Longman, TGKP RL  
 Matthew Norwell, TGKP MN  
 Sarah Nurden, Kent County Council SN  
 (deputising for David Smith)  
 Emma Wiggins, Swale Borough Council EW

### Apologies:

Cllr Jeremy Kite, Dartford Borough Council  
 Kamal Aggarwal, Thomson, Snell and Passmore  
 Robert Goodman, Land Securities/Bluewater  
 Paul Jackson, Dovetail Games  
 Neil Davies, Medway Council (ND)  
 David Hughes, Gravesham Borough Council  
 Rehman Chishti, Member of Parliament

Julie Foley, Environment Agency  
 Paul Kitson, Homes and Communities Agency  
 Iain McNab, Department for Business, Energy and  
 Industrial Strategy  
 David Smith, Kent County Council (DS)  
 Adam Bryan, South East Local Enterprise Partnership

### Actions

#### Item 1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1. The Chairman welcomed those present.

#### Item 2. Minutes of the Board meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018

2.1. The Minutes were agreed. On matters arising:

2.1.1. Para 2.4 – KMBF: Action complete. RB and MN met DS and MD to discuss. Subsequently, Richard L is liaising with Jacqui Ward about how TGKP can support the current arrangements better.

2.1.2. Para 2.5 – Business rate pilot. Action complete. ND circulated the final version of the pilot prospectus.

2.1.3. Para 3.7 – TEPC. Action complete. MN circulated final version of the CDF bid.

2.1.4. Para 5.5 – Locate in Kent. Action complete. GC meets the TGKP officer team regularly.

2.1.5. Para 6.2 – Communications. Action ongoing.

2.1.6. Para 8.3 – Private sector board membership. Action complete. AB and MN met. MN is following up potential board member nominations from

Maidstone.

MN

**Item 3. Lower Thames Crossing – paper TGKP 181213(1)**

3.1. RL introduced his paper and the draft TGKP response to Highways England’s consultation. The draft response aimed to signal TGKP’s strong support for the Lower Thames Crossing, qualified by a number of reservations. These included the design of junctions (e.g. A2, A13), how lack of connectivity would compromise local economic growth opportunities, and concerns about how realistic the modelling was when it took no account of Government’s local housing need projections. Wider network improvements were needed in their own right, and we needed to reiterate that message without loading all associated costs into delivery of the LTC.

3.2. In discussion, the following points were made:

3.2.1. Highways England understand the case for other network improvements. Their difficulty seemed to be in looking holistically at the system and securing the funding to deliver different components. They have also signaled that they welcome responses that highlight these concerns to evidence the case for other network improvements.

3.2.2. AB put on record that Swale BC has withdrawn its support for the LTC unless commitments to the improvements at M2 Junctions 5 and 7, and widening of the M2 between junctions 4 and 7, are made. Highways England’s holding objections to development around the A249, chiefly because of constraints at Junction 5, are stifling delivery of the Local Plan. Swale BC broadly supported the thrust of TGKP’s draft response but their position would need to be referenced.

3.2.3. KB confirmed that Gravesham were generally content with TGKP’s draft. Their own response would reiterate their ‘in principle’ objections to the location of the LTC, but pragmatically were focusing on issues to be addressed to improve the scheme, particularly around modelling and environmental mitigations.

3.2.4. TGKP and other stakeholders should maintain pressure on Highways England – and more directly, Government (DfT and HM Treasury) – to be planning for and committing to other improvements, not waiting until LTC is completed. This would require some multi-pronged lobbying. DG suggested the most impactful approach was likely to be to get an MP to champion and secure a meeting, in Westminster, with the Secretary of State, inviting other MPs to attend.

3.2.5. In due course this would be precisely the kind of issue and role that the new Chair of the Thames Estuary Productivity and Growth Board should take a lead on.

**3.3. Actions:**

- **RL to amend the draft response in light of the Board discussion and re-circulate to Officers;** RL
- **The Board agreed that the final response should be submitted once signed off by the Chair and the Chair of TGKOG.** RB, ND,  
RL
- **RL, in consultation with partners, to develop an action plan for lobbying activity in the New Year. This would also attempt to identify the relevant funding streams that needed to be unlocked to support other network improvements.** RL +  
Others

**Item 4. Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission – next steps – paper TGKP 181213(2)**

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- 4.1. MN reported that discussions with BEIS officials had been positive: they seemed content with the direction of travel on the estuary-wide governance proposals. The detail of those proposals would be agreed at a TGSG meeting on 24 January 2019. Consideration was needed about how to involve Thanet and Canterbury as they were part of the estuary geography. **MN**
- 4.2. DG outlined the work the Seven Hills consultancy had been commissioned to do on branding and campaign strategy to promote a positive narrative about the Estuary. This was intended to add 'sparkle' to lobbying activity, with a focus on "good growth". In process terms, the aim was to get a meeting early in January with all interested parties to get feedback that would shape the final proposition, ideally settled before TGSG (**Action: David Godfrey and Matthew Norwell**). **MN, DG**
- 4.3. The Board noted the report. In light of the budget discussion at the AGM, RC queried how the administration of the Growth & Productivity Board would be funded (the TE2050GC report suggested this would come from local authorities). MN advised that BEIS had indicated informally that some central resources would be provided.
- 4.4. DT remarked that the Thames Estuary Growth Day at the end of October had focused almost entirely on London with little attention to the wider estuary. MN advised that discussions were underway with LB Bexley and South Essex partners about a possible different kind of conference in early 2019 that would be shaped much more to our shared good growth agenda. Further information would be shared as soon as possible (**Action: MN**). **MN**

**Item 5. High streets and planning reforms – paper TGKP 181213(3)**

- 5.1. RL introduced his paper, outlining the scope of the Government's consultation on "Planning reform: supporting the high street and increasing the delivery of new homes". TGKP's primary interest was in the first part of the consultation paper focusing on changes to permitted development rights (PDRs) and other planning reforms intended to help revitalize high streets and enable delivery of more homes. RL suggested TGKP should give a limited welcome to some of the minor proposals but the general thrust of extending PDRs was unwelcome and likely to have unintended adverse consequences, particularly for the supply of commercial and employment premises. The renewed focus on high streets raised the question of whether there was some joint work that TGKP might undertake in 2019.
- 5.2. Board members echoed the concerns about unintended consequences. A major limitation of PDRs was the lack of differentiation according to quality of premises. A similar story could be told on retail premises. Local authorities had also felt the absence of developer contributions towards local infrastructure on conversions carried out under PDRs. The impact could vary in different authorities: the Chairman cited case studies where PDRs had helped take poor quality office stock off the market and enabled provision of student accommodation, whilst another authority had seen its Grade A office stock decimated, pushing rental values to unaffordable levels. PDRs were a blunt instrument where a scalpel would be more appropriate.
- 5.3. The Board concurred with the general approach outlined by RL, and suggested we should emphasise positive points where possible framed within the good growth agenda. The Board also agreed that there was mileage in exploring possible joint

**Actions**

work on high streets and that this should be pursued through the Officers' Group in the first instance.

5.4. **Action:**

- **RL will circulate a draft response to officers for feedback and secure clearance for the final version from the Chairs of this Board and the Officers' Group.**

**RL**

**Item 6. C2E Update – paper TGKP 181213(4)**

- 6.1. RL outlined the work undertaken at both technical and strategic level to date, including submission of the final Strategic Outline Business Case to DfT and MHCLG in November. We were now awaiting their response, most likely – in the first instance – as part of Government's response to the TE2050GC Report.
- 6.2. The Board noted that ongoing issues with Crossrail 1 (over-running on costs and timetable) were unhelpful. TGKP's approach was consistently that this was about rail capacity and connectivity in North Kent, not specifically about extension of Crossrail and that might be a more helpful way of positioning the work going forward. Board members commented on the important role it could have in supporting growth and opportunity, and the need to demonstrate additionality. Careful thought would be needed about cultivating support within Government Departments, and which would be most receptive. The Board noted the report.

**Item 7. Date of the next Board meeting – confirmed as 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 2.30pm.**

**Item 8.** There were no items of AOB. The meeting concluded at 6.15pm.

TGKP, 18 December 2018