

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 September 2018.

Present:

Board members and observers

Rob Bennett, BBP Regeneration (Chair) (RB)
Kamal Aggarwal, Thomson, Snell and Passmore (KA)
Cllr Andrew Bowles, Swale Borough Council (CAB)
Cllr Rodney Chambers, Medway Council (CRC)
Cllr Martin Cox, Maidstone Borough Council (CMC)
Cllr Mark Dance, Kent County Council (CMD)
Mark Heeley, Workman LLP (MH)
Ann Komzolik, North Kent College (AK)

Also present:

Alison Broom, Maidstone Borough Council (AB)
Gavin Cleary, Locate in Kent (GC)
Sarah Dance, SECEN (SD)
Neil Davies, Medway Council (ND)
Graham Harris, Dartford Borough Council (GH)
David Hughes, Gravesham Borough Council (DH)
Tony Ingliss, University of Kent (TI)
Richard Longman, TGKP (RL)
Iain McNab, BEIS (IM)
Matthew Norwell, TGKP (MN)
Shannon Ryan, TGKP (SR)
David Smith, Kent County Council (DS)
Emma Wiggins, Swale Borough Council (EW)
Emma Wilcox, TEPC (EWx)

Apologies:

Carol Barron, University of Kent
Adam Bryan, South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Rehman Chishti, Member of Parliament
Julie Foley, Environment Agency
Robert Goodman, Land Securities/Bluewater
Paul Jackson, Dovetail Games

Cllr Alan Jarrett, Medway Council
Cllr Jeremy Kite, Dartford Borough Council
Paul Kitson, Homes and Communities Agency
Sarah Nurden, Kent County Council
Ian Piper, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation
Cllr David Turner, Gravesham Borough Council

Actions

Item 1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1. The Chairman welcomed those present.

Item 2. Minutes of the Board meeting held on 24th May 2017

- 2.1. The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 24th May were agreed.
- 2.2. Re: para 5.5 Kent and Medway Business Fund. David Smith informed the meeting that KCC will be formally asking members if they wish to continue to sit on the investment advisory board. David informed the group that Cllr Jane Chitty has said she would like to remain as a member but would prefer to only participate in the meetings that have North Kent applicants or strategic items on the agenda.
- 2.3. There is currently approximately £6 million recycled funds available to North Kent, but currently there are no outstanding applications. North Kent applications have been received but none have progressed to full application stage.

Actions

- 2.4. The Chairman asked that the actions outstanding from the last meeting be taken forward: the scheme needed a complete re-think and KCC were asked to consider how the scheme's impact could be maximized in north Kent.

Action: DS and MD to consider how feedback given at the last TGKP Board meeting can be reflected in KMBF organizational structure. DS, CMD

Action: MN and RB to meet MD and DS to agree a proposed way forward. MN, RB, DS, CMD

- 2.5. Business rate pilot: Neil Davies explained that North Kent is developing a prospectus demonstrating how individual authorities propose to use their share of the additional revenue. This will feed into a Kent wide prospectus that presents a case for how each 'cluster' intends to spend their money. North Kent is expecting approximately £3.3 million of additional revenue for the housing.

Action: ND to circulate the final version of the prospectus. ND

Item 3. Thames Estuary Production Corridor

- 3.1. Sarah Dance and Emma Wilcox presented an overview of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) project to the Board. Sarah began by thanking the board members and TGKP for endorsing the project,
- 3.2. TEPC has gained traction and was specifically endorsed in the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission report. Sarah explained that the creative economy is growing twice as fast as the rest of the economy and Kent and Medway have seen 82% growth of creative businesses in the last five years. Growth is nonetheless constrained by supply of skills and spaces: these are things TEPC aims to address.
- 3.3. Emma outlined the three main strands of TEPC as: creative enterprise, place and innovation and skills. Some challenges to be considered include scale, ambition, resource for this work, space and land availability and connectivity (Emma specifically mentioned the need to upgrade digital infrastructure and connectivity).
- 3.4. Hatch Regeneris have done studies which demonstrate a strong creative workforce, sector demand and value in the TEPC concept both economically and socially. Emma informed the Board that approximately 45,000 people are travelling out of Kent and Medway to work in the creative sector. The work has highlighted the area's potential: the next step is looking into what can be done practically to realize this potential. We need the Government to recognize the TEPC as a strategic opportunity: Board members could help in promoting the concept through their networks.
- 3.5. The Board agreed that ambition for the TEPC must remain high. Opportunities should be seized both for relevant funding bids and attracting private sector investment. There is potential to extend the TEPC's reach to associated sectors (e.g. engineering design), and a place-making dimension. Creative businesses need the same kind of economic development support as other sectors. The Chairman urged local authority Board members to consider how TEPC could be reflected in Local Plans and Master Plans etc.
- 3.6. Iain McNab suggested that, against the backdrop of the Industrial Strategy, Government are looking for projects with obvious USPs. The TEPC could be a 'prism' through which to look at and position the whole North Kent economy. Partners in North Kent and South Essex might wish to consider whether the

Thames Estuary could have its own Local Industrial Strategy, regardless of LEP geographies.

- 3.7. TEPC partners have been invited to submit a full application for Cultural Development Fund grant following a successful EOI: the final bid deadline is 19 October. SD emphasized that Board Members' support and advocacy would be welcome.

Action: MN to share details of the final CDF bid with the Board and other colleagues.

MN

Item 4. Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission

- 4.1. MN advised that the TGSG Officer Group was continuing to develop governance proposals in response to the recommendations in the Growth Commission report. The proposed model was based on the principle that any pan-Estuary arrangements should focus only on those projects and issues which the area need to tackle collectively. Everything else should be dealt with at a more local level. It was expected that the TGSG meeting in November would be the last one in the current format. The Board endorsed the approach being taken.

Item 5. Locate in Kent

- 5.1. Gavin Cleary, Locate in Kent CEO, introduced himself and explained the approach he has been taking to familiarizing himself with Kent and reviewing the role of Locate in Kent. LIK's work divides broadly into five strands: (1) commercial property service to clients within and outside Kent; (2) signposting finance and funding opportunities; (3) facilitating access to Whitehall departments, regulatory bodies and professional services; (4) offering sector expertise (notably manufacturing); (5) using a skills specialist to help identify and access talent.
- 5.2. Gavin is keen to articulate what Kent is exceptional at, and sectors where Kent can provide a nationally and internationally competitive offer. These appear to be:
- Creative and Digital: as highlighted in the item on TEPC, Kent has a nationally competitive offer on which to build.
 - Manufacturing: there are many innovative businesses and, in the context of Brexit, potential opportunities to respond to supply chain disruption.
 - Food and Drink: the "Garden of England" label is unpopular. Companies are keen to emphasize the role of innovation including agritech and automation.
 - Logistics and distribution: location in proximity to London is both a challenge and an opportunity; smart technology has a major role to play.
 - Construction: focusing on advanced construction techniques and production technologies (including modular and MMC).
- 5.3. Locate in Kent are working to attract domestic inward investment (e.g. relocations from London) and foreign direct investment (despite Brexit). Investment pipelines tend to be 18-24 months therefore even where potential space is a couple of years away from delivery the time for engagement is now. Key priorities are:
- Presenting a coherent and internationally competitive Kent offer;
 - Getting the right type of business premises coming forward in the right locations;

Actions

- Marketing: it must be recognized that, overseas, Kent is regarded as part of London's hinterland and we need to play to that as well as promoting a strong Kent & Medway level identity.
- 5.4. In discussion, DH suggested that local authorities could have a role in developing pre-let commercial premises. EW gave an example of an investment deal falling through because of traffic congestion on the A249. Away from the HS1 'spine' connectivity is more challenging, and 'last mile' issues highlight the need for upgraded infrastructure. RL queried the relative strength of the manufacturing sector: Gavin acknowledged that it was characterized by SMEs; these have scope to grow in response to supply chain opportunities but we also want to attract some bigger employers, for whom availability of skilled workforce will be crucial. TI drew attention to work University of Kent are doing on workspace environment to promote wellbeing, productivity and collaboration, and offered to share more information with Gavin. ND commented on the need for public sector partners to be agile in responding to and supporting emerging sectors (e.g. medical) and understanding how ways of working (work patterns, use of space) are changing.
- 5.5. RB summed up, thanking Gavin for the update and suggesting that he and MN work together on a protocol for sharing data, intelligence and investment opportunities between LIK and TGKP on a more regular basis.

Action: Tony to provide Gavin with more information on the UoK initiative on workspace environment.

TI/UoK

Action: MN and GC to put in place a more regular update arrangement with Locate in Kent.

MN, GC

Item 6. TGKP Communications

- 6.1. Shannon Ryan has been on placement with TGKP from the KCC Graduate Programme for the past six months. A substantial part of her role in the team has been to introduce more structure, confidence and dynamism to the ways in which TGKP communicates. Shannon presented the Communications Strategy which she has developed: this provides a review of the current situation and analyses stakeholder, objectives and channels of communication. She has met colleagues of partner organizations to ensure the work TGKP is pursuing complements and enhances their individual priorities. The strategy is accompanied by a workplan which highlights specific products to be developed. The priority products, which are in various stages of development, include:
- TGKP Website review and update – starting with what can be done in-house; more radical change may require professional input;
 - TGKP Toolkit – data, infographics, image gallery and briefing notes setting out TGKP perspective on key topics;
 - TGKP Twitter – currently being trialed, possible foray into other social media.
- 6.2. One key piece of feedback from Shannon's consultations across North Kent bodies was the need for partners to get better at cascading information, and proactive in sharing information rather than only reacting if and when asked. RL asked local authorities in particular to continue to engage with the action plan Shannon has set in motion.

All

Action: All to keep TGKP on their communications radar and cascade relevant information through their organizations.

Item 7. Date of the Next Meeting

- 7.1. This was set at 4.30pm on 13 December. This Annual General Meeting will also take place at this time.

Item 8. AOB

- 8.1. The Chairman thanked Shannon Ryan for her work with TGKP, and wished her luck for the future as she continues with the KCC Graduate Programme.
- 8.2. Iain McNab advised that Kelly Tollhurst MP's private office were looking for possible schemes to include in a Ministerial visit for Green Business Week on 18 October. **Any suggestions to be sent to Iain.**
- 8.3. Private sector board members: there are still two vacancies for private sector board members. Sectors which are not currently represented are: Finance, Logistics, Health, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Marketing and Communications and Lifesciences and Meditech. All agreed that TGKP should take a more proactive approach to seeking out potential interest in new board members. All also agreed that Maidstone specifically should be invited to propose a private sector board member.

All

Action: MN proactively to seeking out interest in joining the board. MN to meet Alison Broom to consider how to follow up a Maidstone-based nomination.

MN, AB

TGKP, October 2018