
Approved Minutes of the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Board Meeting held in Darwin Room, Innovation Centre Medway, at 2.30pm-4.30pm, on **16 May 2016**.

Present:

Board members and observers:

Kamal Aggarwal, Thomson, Snell and Passmore
Rob Bennett, BBP Regeneration (Chair)
Cllr Mike Cosgrove, Swale Borough Council
Cllr John Cubitt, Gravesham Borough Council
Cllr Mark Dance, Kent County Council
Robert Goodman, Bluewater, Land Securities
Cllr Alan Jarrett, Medway Council
Ann Komzolik, North Kent College
Paul Spooner, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation

Also present:

Neil Davies, Medway Council
Ross Gill, Kent County Council
Graham Harris, Dartford Borough Council
David Hughes, Gravesham Borough Council
Abdool Kara, Swale Borough Council
David Liston-Jones, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Richard Longman, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Iain McNab, Cities and Local Growth unit, BIS/DCLG
Rhiannon Mort, Kent County Council
Sarah Nurden, Kent and Medway Economic Partnership
Linda Searle, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
David Smith, Kent County Council
Lucy Spencer-Lawrence, South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Jacqui Ward, Kent County Council

Apologies:

Cllr Andrew Bowles, Swale Borough Council
Adam Bryan, South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Cllr Rodney Chambers, Medway Council
Rehman Chishti, Member of Parliament
Martin Davies, University of Greenwich
Alan Everard, Tarmac
Cllr Jeremy Kite, Dartford Borough Council
Andrew Pearce/Richard Penn, Environment Agency
Naisha Polaine, Homes and Communities Agency

Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1. **The Chairman welcomed** attendees to the Board meeting, in particular Paul Spooner, Chief Executive of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, who was attending his first meeting as a TGKP Board member. The Chairman also welcomed Iain McNab, BIS, who was attending for Item 4; Sarah Nurden (KMEP) and Rhiannon Mort (KCC) who were attending for Item 5; and Jacqui Ward (KCC) who was attending for Item 6.

2. Item 2: Minutes of TGKP Board Meeting on 23 February 2016 and Matters Arising

- 2.1. The draft minutes of the 23 February 2016 Board meeting **were agreed**, subject to correcting the list of attendees to record Cllr Cubitt's apologies. On **matters arising**:
 - Paragraph 3.5: Actioned. TGKP's full draft response on the Lower Thames Crossing consultation had been circulated to the Board for comment and approval.
 - Paragraph 3.6: Actioned. A message had been prepared and issued to North Kent Businesses to encourage as many as possible to respond to the consultation.

3. ITEM 3: Progress on Ebbsfleet Garden City – presentation by Paul Spooner, Interim Chief Executive, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation

- 3.1. The Chairman invited Paul Spooner to introduce his presentation, which was to update the Board on progress on the Garden City and on future plans.
- 3.2. Paul outlined the progress being made: £310m being invested to unlock barriers to delivery, accelerated starts on site, collaborative work to maximise the opportunities for growth and measures to improve quality, raising the quality of neighbourhoods, streets, homes and services.
- 3.3. Paul said he was working closely with John Cubitt, Jeremy Kite and Mark Dance through the EDC Board on the plans for the Garden City. It would not be competing with existing town centres in Dartford and Gravesend.
- 3.4. The EDC was looking to create 'centres of excellence' in particular industries or sectors. This chimed well with what we understood to be the approach of the new Thames Estuary Growth Commission. One idea was to develop a new medical campus at Ebbsfleet which would complement, and add to, existing provision in the area.
- 3.5. Paul went on to review progress in 2016/2017. There were already 5 housebuilders on-site and it was estimated that there would be 400 completions this year. The draft Garden City master plan would be ready for agreement in June. The EDC was supporting and facilitating the development of London Paramount through co-ordination of master planning and working together to address strategic transport and access issues.
- 3.6. An MoU had been agreed with EIGP (Land Securities/Tarmac) to develop Ebbsfleet Central and Land Securities' sale of Eastern Quarry to Henley Camland had been completed. The aim was to accelerate the build-out rate to deliver 1,000 homes a year from 2017/2018, with a total of 11,000 new homes completed by April 2026.
- 3.7. In discussion the following points were made:

- in the context of the overall strategy for the North Kent Innovation Zone, it would be important that any new medical campus at Ebbsfleet did not compete with the Kent Medical Campus in Maidstone. Paul confirmed that the EDC would be looking to complement the facilities at Maidstone;
- given that construction was already underway, and that a large number of planning permissions had already been granted, how would new requirements on quality be enforced? Paul said that with more new developers being attracted, keen to make their contribution in the Garden City, there would be strong competition and he was confident that high quality development would be achieved;
- a question was asked about the expected demographic of those coming to live at Ebbsfleet. Paul said that it was important to respect the Local Plans and meet the requirements of local communities. There would be a range of family housing, but it was also likely that the 4,000 homes in the central area would be higher density, with a higher proportion of apartments, and so more likely to appeal to a younger demographic, and to attract people from London.
- in response to a question about the extent to which people would be able to live and work in the Garden City, Paul said he was confident there would be enough employment opportunities for local people, so that those who wished to live and work at Ebbsfleet could do so.
- One of the challenges was to get housebuilders/developers to increase their build rates. How was the Corporation dealing with this in order to achieve their target of over 1,000 completions a year? Paul said that in his view the key was to increase the number of developers building on site at any one time, and the number of sales outlets, as they had been doing.
- Robert Goodman and Paul confirmed that Bluewater and the EDC were working very closely together to maximize the opportunities. One element would be to upgrade Fastrack and provide a really high quality public transport access to Bluewater from the Garden City.
- A question was asked about the nature of the commercial centre the EDC envisaged at Ebbsfleet. The original aspiration for Ebbsfleet, pre the financial crisis, had been for a centre focused mainly on business and financial services. This was not now likely but Paul argued that the merits of Ebbsfleet as a location, with its high speed rail connections both to mainland Europe and to central London, meant that it would attract high value industries from a range of different sectors eg the medical sector mentioned earlier.

3.8. The **Chairman thanked Paul** on behalf of Board members for his very interesting and informative presentation.

4. **ITEM 4: Thames Estuary Growth Commission – paper TGKP(16)7 – Iain McNab, Thames Gateway Lead, Cities and Growth Unit, BIS/DCLG**

4.1. The Chair invited Iain McNab to introduce his paper. Iain said that the Government had asked Lord Heseltine to lead a Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission. The first part of the paper repeated the announcement. This made it clear that, whilst the Commission would no doubt look at some shorter term issues, the focus was on

setting out a 'route map' for the long term future up to 2050. Iain also commented that although there was a reference to the Lower Thames Crossing in the announcement the Commission would not be seeking to second guess the Government on the preferred route for the Crossing.

4.2. Iain's paper listed the names of the members of the Commission. It was recognised that these were mainly national figures and it would be important for the Commission to engage with local stakeholders. At the moment Lord Heseltine was holding one-to-one discussions with each Commission member. Following these meetings a remit/workplan paper would be prepared for the first meeting of the Commission, which was likely to be held at the end of June/early July. The intention was to arrange meetings in a way that external partners could respond to in a structured way, for example by holding theme based meetings. There would also be a programme of visits arranged. The secretariat for the Commission would be provided by Iain and Jack Stevens in the Cities and Local Growth Unit. Iain confirmed that the Commission would be including Thanet and Canterbury within its scope as well as the Thames Gateway authorities.

4.3. The following points were raised in discussion:

- It was suggested that the Thames Gateway Strategic Group could play a useful role in linking local partners with the Commission. Iain commented that it would be sensible for TGSG to position itself to support the work of the Commission. For example the Group might want to synchronise the timing of its meetings with those of the Commission. It may also want to strengthen its private sector membership.
- The issue was raised of whether there would be any opportunities for bidding for funding of Thames Gateway projects, given the decision to set up the Commission and the Government's renewed interest in the Gateway. In response Iain said that the LGF3 round would provide an opportunity for local partners to bid for funding for projects in the Gateway. If the LEP wished to see projects funded in the Gateway it would be sensible for SELEP to highlight the Thames Gateway as a top priority in its submission.
- The membership of the Commission was discussed. It was suggested that the Chair of SELEP should be invited to be an additional member. It was also pointed out that, although the Commission membership contained a variety of interests and expertise, there did not appear to be many with a planning or local authority background, with the exception of Sir Edward Lister. What would be the relationship between the Commission's work and Local Plans? Iain commented that it would clearly be important to ensure that local authorities were able to engage effectively with the Commission.
- Concern was expressed that the Commission, given its membership, might seek to reopen the idea of an Estuary Airport. Iain said that he did not think it was the Commission's intention to revisit that issue.
- A question was raised as to whether TGKP should be proactive and submit evidence now, or wait until the Commission's workplan had been published. Iain said in his view it would be better to wait until the work plan had been made public and evidence could then be submitted in a structured manner.

4.4. The **Chairman thanked Iain** for his helpful update for members.

5. **ITEM 5: Local Growth Fund Round 3 – Thames Gateway Kent Priorities – paper TGKP(16)8 – Sarah Nurden, Strategic Programme Manager, KMEP**

5.1. The Chair invited Sarah Nurden to introduce her paper. Sarah said that a further tranche - £1.8 billion - of Local growth Fund had been released. Based on population Kent and Medway could expect to receive around £60million but, in his letter of 12 April, Greg Clark had made it clear that no area was entitled to a particular share of funding and that the awards would be on the basis of the merits of the cases put forward. Sarah's said the paper set out the criteria for prioritisation agreed by KMEP, and the timetable and process for arriving at a list of prioritized schemes. A key meeting was the KMEP meeting on 14 June. Sarah said she and colleagues in KCC were working with each of the district councils and with Medway Council to develop business cases for the bids. She welcomed this opportunity to inform the Board of the emerging project proposals and to seek the members' comments and views in advance of the KMEP meeting.

5.2. There followed a brief review of the emerging proposals:

- The Medway Council bids included two proposals for Chatham City Centre and for Rochester Airport Technology Park which built on schemes part-funded in earlier LGF rounds. The Strood Civic Centre proposal was for flood defence works on a site which suffered from flood risk. The proposals for Gillingham High Street were for much needed investment to rejuvenate the High Street bring it up to modern day standards.
- The Dartford proposals related to investment in the town centre to enable the delivery of retail and mixed use development, and to fund transport schemes needed to support three key town centre sites. Investment in transport infrastructure was a critical need in Dartford.
- In Gravesham, the third proposal was the third element in the Gravesend Transport Quarter regeneration project. The Public Transport interchange was an integral part of the vision for the project.
- The Swale proposals included a scheme for much needed improvements to the A2500 Lower Road which would directly support the delivery of 1500 new homes. Also included was a much bigger and more expensive scheme for improvements to the A249 Grovehurst Junction. This scheme was important to the development of the 'A249 Corridor'.
- The Ebbsfleet Development Corporation was also working up some LGF bids, including proposals to support the development of a medical skills and training centre.
- It was argued that given the importance of the Thames Gateway as a top priority for both the LEP and for the Government there was a case for grouping projects together as a Thames Gateway 'package' to show how the projects fitted into to our overall strategy for the Gateway.
- Well developed and persuasive business cases were being worked up for all the emerging proposals.

5.3. **The Chairman thanked Sarah** for her briefing. It was agreed that the proposals should continue to be developed taking into account comments made in the discussion. **ACTION: Sarah Nurden and colleagues, together with officers in Medway Council, the district councils and the TGKP team, to continue to develop the proposals in preparation for the KMEP meeting on 14 June, taking into account the views expressed by Board members.**

6. **Item 6: TIGER Programme Update – Paper TGKP(16)9 – Jacqui Ward, Regional Growth Fund Manager, KCC**

6.1. The Chairman introduced this item by drawing the Board's attention to the cover note for the paper and to the draft minutes of the last TIGER Strategic Board meeting, held on 29 October last year, which had been circulated with the papers for this meeting. He explained that the draft minutes not yet been approved as there had no meeting since then of the Strategic Board. As the cover paper explained, now that Thurrock had confirmed that they would be withdrawing from the TIGER partnership, the membership of the TGKP Board and TIGER Strategic Board was identical. The Chairman therefore enquired whether Board members would wish to constitute this part of the meeting as a TIGER Strategic Board. That would enable the draft minutes to be considered and, if members were content, approved, and any matters arising discussed.

6.2. There followed a brief debate on what the best approach should be to recognising the changed circumstances for the TIGER Strategic Board. It was important to ensure that the procedures that were followed were fully in accordance with the agreed Terms of Reference for the TIGER Strategic Board. It was therefore agreed that the issue needed some more consideration, and that further advice should be brought back to the Board at an appropriate time. **ACTION: David Liston-Jones, in consultation with Jacqui Ward, to consider the future arrangements for the TIGER Strategic Board in the light of members' comments, and submit further advice to the TGKP Board and to the TIGER Strategic Board for consideration in due course.**

6.3. The Chairman then invited Jacqui Ward to introduce her paper, which updated the Board on the funding awarded to companies in North Kent and Thurrock, on monitoring of loan repayments and on creation of jobs. Jacqui said that the TIGER programme was performing well with a low level of bad debts. As set out in the paper, 87% of monitoring returns were in the 'Green' or 'Amber' category. There were 6 companies in the 'Red' category where there were significant shortfalls on milestones/targets. All 6 companies were being closely monitored, with site visits and meetings taking place. Jacqui said the actual number of jobs created was slightly down on the target of 910 jobs, but it was important to note that this was a long term target.

6.4. In discussion the following points were made:

- Jacqui was asked whether the local authority Economic Development Officers were being kept informed about the at risk companies. She confirmed that they were.
- Members enquired asked about the position on recycling of TIGER loan repayments. Were those repayments ringfenced, and when would we be in a position to start recycling funds to companies? Jacqui responded by saying that

KCC had commissioned two studies to inform next steps – one looking at the overall financial landscape in Kent and the financial products that were available, and the second reviewing the operation of the Kent and Medway Growth Hub. It was hoped that the results of both these studies would be available in mid-June.

- In response to a request from the Chairman Jacqui gave members a brief update on the equity investments.

6.5. **The Chairman thanked Jacqui** for her update and paper. It was agreed that the Board should receive a further update at a future Board meeting. **ACTION: a further update on the TIGER programme to be provided to the Board in due course.**

7. **Item 7: Updates on current issues**

7.1. **NK Innovation Zone – paper TGKP(16)10.** Richard Longman said his paper updated the Board on progress on preparing for commencement of the new Enterprise Zone on 1 April 2017. The paper summarised proposals for governance and the setting up of a strategic board for the NKIZ. A key issue was identifying a suitable person to serve as Chair. The paper reviewed progress on preparing the implementation plan and set out the latest position on agreeing a MOU between Government and EZ partners. It was hoped to sign the MOU by the end of September.

7.2. **The Chairman thanked Richard for his report which was noted by the Board.**

7.3. **Extension of Crossrail – paper TGKP(16)11** Richard Longman said the paper was to update the Board on the latest position on the studies on the feasibility of extending Crossrail from Abbey Wood to Gravesend. The paper summarised the findings to date and set out the next steps. It would be important to make sure that this issue was on the radar of the Thames Estuary Growth Commission. Richard said that we should be in a position to report back on the outputs from Stage 2 of the study at the September Board meeting. The Board was invited to note the report.

7.4. **The Chairman thanked Richard for his paper. The Board noted the report and agreed on the need to raise awareness of the project, in particular with the Thames Estuary Growth Commission.**

7.5. **HCA Update – paper TGKP(16)12.** The Chair advised that the HCA Update paper was for information. The question was raised, as it had been at the previous meeting, of why there had been no take up in North Kent of the HCA programmes listed in Appendix 2 of the paper. It was suggested that TGKP could do some work, in consultation with HCA, possibly also contacting builders and developers, to get a better understanding as to why the take up had been so low by developers in our area. It was pointed out, though, that there had been a good response from local authorities in North Kent to one of the other HCA programmes, not listed in the Appendix, the Starter Homes: Unlocking the Land Fund **Action: TGKP team to liaise with HCA and investigate reasons for poor take up of HCA programmes.**

7.6. **Forthcoming Events** – David Liston-Jones advised the North Kent B2B event would be taking place on 29 June at Buckmore Park, Chatham and was again being sponsored by TGKP. Paul Spooner (EDC) and Rob Bennett (TGKP Chair) would be speaking at the event.

7.7. Paul Spooner and David Liston-Jones would be speaking at a Thomson Snell and

Passmore event on 30 June on transport infrastructure in the Thames Gateway. Katie Stewart, KCC, would also be speaking at this event. Paul Spooner suggested it would be helpful, for presentations of this kind, to produce a graphic showing the key growth opportunities in the Thames Gateway. David Liston-Jones said that a graphic had been produced for TGSG as part of the transport prospectus, which could perhaps serve this purpose, or be adapted to do so. **Action: David Liston-Jones to send Paul Spooner the graphic produced for the TGSG transport prospectus.**

7.8. Updates from members

- Alan Jarrett briefed members on the current state of play on devolution discussions in Kent and Medway. A meeting of local authority Leaders was taking place the next day, on 17 May, to agree the way forward. A further update would be provided at the next Board meeting. **Action: local authority members to update the Board on progress on the devolution agenda at the September Board meeting.**
- Anne Komzolik said that Mid Kent and North Kent colleges were working together in partnership on the launch of the new 'Skills Hub Kent and Medway'. The Skills Hub was designed to realise the potential of upskilling the workforce through apprenticeships and commercial training.

8. Item 8: Budget Report – paper TGKP(16)13 plus separate schedule

- 8.1. David Liston-Jones introduced the Budget Report. David advised that income for financial year 2015-16 totalled £219,000, whilst expenditure was £211,004. As expenditure in the last financial year had been slightly below income there had been a £7,996 contribution to the accumulated surplus.
- 8.2. TGKP's income from local authority contributions in 2016-17 was forecast to be £219,000, the same as for 2015-16. Approval was sought to an initial budget of £267,725 for 2016-17. The Report stated that the current accumulated surplus stood at £343,685, which was higher than the minimum level required, although as expenditure was likely to exceed income in this financial year, and in future years, the surplus was expected to reduce over time.
- 8.3. **The Board noted** the position on income and expenditure for 2015-16, **approved** the initial budget of £267,725 for 2016-17 and agreed to review the budget at its December Board meeting. **The Board also noted** the level of the accumulated surplus and **agreed** to consider the position again in December when it reviewed the budget and examined the funding options for 2017-18.

9. Item 9: AOB

- 9.1. The Board was asked to note the next TGKP Board meeting would take place on Monday 12 September, at the later start time of 4.30pm.
- 9.2. The meeting closed at 4.40pm.

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

May 2016