
Approved Minutes of the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Board Meeting
held in Darwin Room, Innovation Centre Medway, 2.30-4.30pm, **Monday 21**
September 2015

Board Members and Observers Present:

Kamal Aggarwal – Thomson, Snell and Passmore
Rob Bennett – BBP Regeneration (Chair)
Cllr Andrew Bowles – Swale Borough Council
Cllr John Cubitt – Gravesham Borough Council
Cllr Mark Dance – Kent County Council
Martin Davies – University of Greenwich
Cllr Jeremy Kite – Dartford Borough Council
Andrew Pearce – Environment Agency
Naisha Polaine – Homes and Communities Agency

Also Present:

Cllr Jane Chitty – Medway Council
Robin Cooper – Ebbsfleet Development Corporation
The Rt Hon Mark Francois MP – Minister for the Thames Gateway
Ross Gill – Kent County Council
Graham Harris – Dartford Borough Council
Richard Hicks – Medway Council
David Hughes – Gravesham Borough Council
David Godfrey – South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Mike Goulding – Homes and Communities Agency
Abdool Kara – Swale Borough Council
Ajit Kaur – Medway Council
Tom Kinsey – Department for Communities and Local Government
David Liston-Jones – Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Richard Longman – Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Iain McNab – Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Linda Searle – Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
David Smith – Kent County Council

Apologies:

Cllr Rodney Chambers – Medway Council
Rehman Chishti – Member of Parliament
Neil Davies – Medway Council
Cllr Alan Jarrett – Medway Council
Robert Goodman – Bluewater
Ann Komzolik – North West Kent College
James Speck – Kent Science Park
Paul Whittlesea – Department for Communities and Local Government

1. Items 1 and 2: Introductions, Welcome to the Rt Hon Mark Francois MP, Minister for the Thames Gateway, and Discussion on Opportunities and Challenges in North Kent:

1.1. The Chairman welcomed attendees, in particular the Rt Hon Mark Francois MP, new Minister for the Thames Gateway. He also welcomed:

- Martin Davies, University of Greenwich. Martin had taken over from Professor Tom Barnes as the University's representative and was attending his first Board meeting;
- Cllr Jane Chitty, representing Cllr Rodney Chambers;
- Robin Cooper, attending his first meeting as a Board member representing the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation;
- Richard Hicks, who had taken over Robin Cooper's post at Medway Council;
- Mike Goulding, Homes and Communities Agency, giving a presentation at Item 6 on the Agenda;
- David Godfrey, South East Local Enterprise Partnership and;
- Ajit Kaur, Senior Accountant, Medway Council. Ajit is the senior accountant dealing with TGKP in Medway Council's finance department and was attending to brief herself on the work of the Partnership.

1.2. The Chairman introduced the item on 'Opportunities and Challenges' by telling the Minister about the role and purpose of the Partnership, including some of its key achievements, and about how, with partners, the partnership worked to help deliver economic growth in North Kent. He highlighted progress that had been made, and referred to the new facilities that had been provided such as the Universities at Medway campus and the Medway University Technical College, which the Minister had visited earlier in the day. He also drew attention to some of the key opportunities, including London Paramount and the Ebbsfleet Garden City, as well as some of the challenges such as the pressures on transport infrastructure and the need to continue to raise skills levels.

1.3. The Minister responded by thanking the Partnership for inviting him to North Kent. As an Essex MP he already had a good knowledge of the issues in the Essex part of the Gateway, and was keen to increase his understanding of the issues facing North Kent. He recognised the importance of transport infrastructure in order to deliver the housing we needed. He also had a particular interest in education and skills. He had been keen, therefore, to tour the Medway UTC, which he thought was excellent, and had been very impressed by the students he had met at the College. His focus was very much on delivery and, in his role as Thames Gateway Minister, he would help wherever he could, in particular to help make connections within Government.

1.4. The Chairman opened up the discussion to Board members. A wide-ranging debate was held covering issues such as the need for FE provision in Swale and FE funding more generally, the importance of an early Government decision on the Lower Thames Crossing following consultation, the support of partners for the North Kent Enterprise Zone bid, the scope for extension of Crossrail to Ebbsfleet and Gravesend, the

importance the local community attached to the Government keeping its promises on support for the Ebbsfleet Garden City, including timely delivery of infrastructure such as A2 junction improvements, the need to strengthen links between colleges and business, and the importance of delivering high quality as well as greater numbers in new housing. Environmental issues such as waste water treatment needed to be dealt with and managed properly. It was argued that the rationale for the Thames Gateway remained valid and there was a great deal of life left in the Gateway concept.

1.5. The Minister responded by referring to the fact that there would be a consultation on route options for the Lower Thames Crossing early in the New Year. On transport infrastructure eg the need for new junctions, he said that the CSR was inevitably going to be tight and, as he had said at the recent TGSG meeting, there was a need to avoid long 'wish lists' and for some real prioritisation to be done. On skills, he commented that there were very similar issues in South Essex. He felt there was a need to raise skills and aspirations significantly. On the need for quality, he said it was important to work with local communities, and for local people to see that what was happening was for their benefit. As the area grew it was important that the growth happened in an environmentally sustainable way.

1.6. The Chairman thanked the Minister and Board members for their contributions to what had been a useful discussion.

2. **ITEM 3 – Enterprise Zone bid - North Kent Innovation Zone** – presentation by Richard Longman, TGKP.

2.1. Richard Longman confirmed that the North Kent Enterprise Zone bid had been submitted to Government by the South East LEP the previous Friday (18 September). The bid had been selected by the KMED as the number one priority bid for Kent and Medway. Richard explained that the bid would enhance and strengthen the Kent Innovation Corridor. It was a multi-site bid focusing on three areas – sites in the Ebbsfleet Garden City, the Kent Medical Campus at Maidstone and Rochester Airport Technology Park.

2.2. Richard said that the sites covered an area of 64 hectares and would create 230,000m² of development floor space for start-ups and SME expansion. The bid would build on existing specialisms such as life-sciences and advanced manufacturing, and new opportunities for shaping a 21st Century 'smart city'. It was estimated that 9,900 jobs would be created by 2027. The bid would now be assessed within Government, and an announcement was expected in November. In the meantime Richard said a project team had been established to refine governance and delivery arrangements, and to respond to information requests.

2.3. In discussion, it was emphasised that whilst a number of bids had come forward in Kent and Medway, it had been unanimously agreed by local authorities and businesses at the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership that the North Kent Innovation Zone bid should be the number one priority for Kent and Medway. Furthermore Kent had a proven track record in making Enterprise Zones work successfully, such as at Discovery Park. Members were urged to ensure that local MPs were fully briefed on the bid.

2.4. **The Chairman** thanked Richard Longman for his helpful presentation.

3. **Item 4 – Progress on Ebbsfleet Garden City** - update by Robin Cooper, Chief Executive, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC).
- 3.1. Robin Cooper updated the Board on progress, now that the Corporation had been established and the EDC Board was in place. The Corporation itself did not own much of the land. The majority of the land was owned by Land Securities and Lafarge/Holcim. The intention was to deliver 15,000 new homes. Robin said that the proposed site for London Paramount came within the Corporation's area. London Paramount would be the fourth largest entertainment complex in the World. There were clearly significant infrastructure issues that needed to be addressed. Robin referred to the aspiration for Crossrail to be extended to Ebbsfleet and Gravesend. As well as the key issue of the Lower Thames Crossing, there was also the need for improvements to the two key junctions on the A2 at Bean and Ebbsfleet. A bid had been submitted to Government for support for infrastructure costs, including for land remediation and sewerage works.
- 3.2. As well as being part of the North Kent bid for EZ status already discussed, the Corporation was also applying to get 'Healthy New Town' status. Robin went on to say that a key issue for the Corporation was the commercial space around the international station; they were looking at the provision of innovation space and a skills centre to lead the way. Finally Robin said that discussions had been taking place with Government on the delivery of starter homes.
- 3.3. In discussion, the following points were made:
- it was important that the existing local communities outside the Garden City were able to share in the benefits. If the EDC was a success it would unlock the potential of sites outside the Corporation's boundaries.
 - although Dartford and Gravesham were the key local areas affected, given the scale of what was proposed it needed to be seen in the context of the wider Thames Gateway. If we got this right the implications for supply chains, for growth and for jobs would be felt right across the Gateway.
- 3.4. **The Chair thanked Robin for his update.** He commented that filling 27,000 jobs would be an enormous ask, and a huge opportunity. As well as the many jobs in the hospitality sector, London Paramount would bring opportunities for new high-value jobs in, for example, IT, media, and communications. This was therefore a crucial issue for the Partnership to focus its efforts on over the coming period.
4. **ITEM 6: Kent and Medway Economic Assets Programme Update** – Paper TGKP(15)14 and presentation by Naisha Polaine/Mike Goulding, HCA.
- 4.1. Naisha advised that the paper and presentation provided an update on the de-risking of sites to maximize value and bring forward development, and on the disposal of sites. Good progress was being made. These 6-monthly updates to the TGKP Board now replaced the separate Stewardship meetings that had previously been held. Separate meetings were held with Dover and Ashford Councils in relation to their sites.
- 4.2. Mike Goulding (HCA) introduced his presentation on the Kent and Medway Stewardship Model, and thanked the local authorities for their help in putting

plans together for the sites. Mike set out the latest overall position on investment and receipts. For investment the figures were £6.0m 2012-13, £6.6m 2013-14, £6.0m 2014-15, £3.8m 2015-16) and for receipts £3.5m 2013-14, £16.4m 2014-15, £2.0m 2015-16 (projected), £9.3m 2016-17 (projected), and a further £46m projected for the future.

4.3. Mike then updated the Board on progress in each area:

- Dartford – The Northern Gateway sites and the Base Innovation Centre had been sold; marketing of the Unwins backland would commence after EA published their flood risk appraisal, due in December 2015. Marketing of Station Mound/Co-op sites had commenced, it was expected the preferred developer for mixed-use development would be identified by the end of the year.
- Northfleet Embankment – All HCA-led site works had now been completed. The Burch Road site had been sold and construction of 12 housing units was underway, for completion this financial year. The Invitation to Tender for the housing delivery element of the site had been issued by HCA in September seeking a developer partner to deliver circa 500 units.
- Queenborough and Rushenden (Q and R) – A review of the Master Plan had resulted in a reduction in overall housing numbers to 1,100 homes. Demolition, remediation and land-raising for the second phase of the site works was underway. Marketing of the first phase, of between 100-125 homes, had commenced. Construction of non-food retail phase of employment development at Neat's Court had been completed and units let, creating 150 new jobs. Aldi had planning consent for a 600,000ft² distribution centre, with the potential for 400 jobs. Construction had commenced with completion expected by end of 2016.
- Chatham Maritime
 - St Mary's Island – Countryside Maritime Ltd had commenced construction of Sector 13, comprising 65 units.
 - Interface Land – HCA had appointed consultants to assess opportunities and constraints for the remaining 13 acres of developable land to progress disposal 2016-17.
 - South of Basins – Transfers of residual freeholds and public realm were continuing with the Chatham Maritime Trust.
 - Pumphouse – A preferred development partner had been selected and planning application had been approved to use the building as a gin distillery.
- Rochester Riverside – the new Rochester railway station was under construction and was due to open in December 2015. Medway Council had adopted the new Rochester Riverside master plan and design guides for the site. Medway and HCA had commenced marketing of the whole Rochester Riverside site, and selection of a preferred developer was planned by March 2016.

4.4. Mike Goulding concluded by drawing the Board's attention to the potential risks to delivery of the overall programme. These included planning delays, market appetite for large schemes, market activity slowing, and off-site highway junction improvements in relation to Q and R.

- 4.5. **The Chairman thanked Mike Goulding** for his helpful and comprehensive presentation.
- 4.6. **The Minister left the meeting at this point, and the Chairman thanked him for his support and for participating in the Board's discussions.**
5. **ITEM 5: Minutes of TGKP Board Meeting on 17 June 2015 and Matters Arising**
- 5.1. Apologies were recorded.
- 5.2. The draft minutes of the 17 June Board meeting 2015 **were agreed**. On matters arising:

Para 2.1.1, Ross Gill advised that the AECOM study would be going to the Kent Leaders' meeting the next day and, once the final version had become available, would be circulated to the Board. **ACTION: Ross Gill to circulate the AECOM study once it became available.**

Para 2.1.6, Actioned – the draft letter from the TGSG Chairman to the Thames Gateway Minister had been sent, and had formed the basis of discussions at the 15 September TGSG meeting.

Para 4.5, Actioned – comments had been fed through to Ross Gill regarding the future of the SELEP. No formal Government response had been received to the proposal for a Kent and Medway LEP. Papers for the next SELEP meeting had been circulated and contained a recommendation for the appointment of a new Chair etc. It was agreed that it would be helpful for the SELEP papers to be circulated to Board members. **ACTION: TGKP to circulate SELEP papers to the Board.**

Para 5.3, Actioned – the Chair had written to the Secretary of State at the Department for Transport as agreed.

Para 5.4, Actioned – a meeting had been held with Transport for London.

Para 6.7, - A paper on the review of TGKP was on the Agenda.

Para 6.8, - **Board membership**

- David Liston-Jones said he had been in dialogue with Robin Cooper following the Board's decision to invite the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation to become a Board member, on the basis set out in the minutes. David and Robin confirmed the current position was that the EDC was content to become a full member of the TGKP Board and, in principle, to make a financial contribution to the costs of the Partnership along with the other public sector members, ie the local authorities. The level of any contribution would need to be agreed later in the year, in the light of the outcome of the TGKP review, when all funding contributions for the next financial year would be considered.
- David reported that the Chairman had written to Professor Tom Barnes, and to David Simms, to put on record the Board's thanks for their work for TGKP. David said, as reported earlier, it was now confirmed Martin Davies was Tom Barnes' replacement on the Board, representing the University of Greenwich. In terms of David Simms' replacement, David said he had approached Lafarge Holcim to establish whether the company wished to remain as a Board member, but had not yet received

any response. **It was agreed** should no response be received in the near future a new private sector member should be sought. **ACTION: David Liston-Jones to continue to seek a response from Lafarge Holcim.**

- **MP representation:** David reported that Neil Davies had spoken to Rehman Chishti, and Rehman had indicated he was content to continue as a Board member. He was happy to assist TGKP in any way he could, but his parliamentary responsibilities meant it would be difficult for him to attend Board meetings on a regular basis. There followed a brief discussion on how best to engage with MPs more generally. It was suggested that perhaps now was the time to press for a 'Westminster Hall' debate in Parliament on the Thames Gateway. On the other hand, it was argued that it was likely to be more productive to engage MPs, and seek their support, on a case-by-case basis.

Para 10.1, Actioned - an EoI and application for the TASC initiative (Adaptation Support for Councils on Climate Change) had been submitted. However, David Liston-Jones advised he had subsequently been informed that TGKP's application had not been selected.

- 5.3. Following on from the previous item on engagement with MPs, there was a brief discussion about getting renewed momentum into the wider debate on infrastructure in the Thames Gateway, and the role of Thames Gateway Strategic Group. Some argued for a more active push at the Thames Gateway level, others said that we should focus our efforts at the North Kent level. **Summing up the discussion, the Chairman said** what was agreed was that we needed to be clear about our infrastructure and broader strategic priorities. In the context of the exercise on transport infrastructure priorities commissioned at the last TGSG meeting, the draft priorities for North Kent should be brought to the December Board meeting for approval. **ACTION: TGKP team to bring paper on transport priorities for approval to the December Board meeting, prior to discussion at TGSG.**

6. ITEM 7: Partnership matters - Papers TGKP(15)15 and TGKP(15)16

Review of TGKP - TGKP(15)15

- 6.1. David Liston-Jones introduced his paper. At its last meeting in June, the Board had agreed to defer the review until the Autumn, when the position on some of the wider strategic issues would be clearer. There had been mixed views at the June meeting on how the review should be carried out. David said the Officers' Group had looked again at the options for taking forward the review, and this paper now proposed a staged approach which sought to strike a balance between having a simple straightforward process, but one which nevertheless ensured a robust review was carried out with some external challenge. The Board's views were sought on these proposals.
- 6.2. In discussion the following points were made:
- there were many more important issues at the moment that required the Partnership's full attention; it would be wrong to get diverted and devote scarce time and resources to a review;

- a number of members said they were content with the Partnership, its staff and the way it was operating. The view was expressed that TGKP was an impressive partnership – other parts of the country were trying to establish the kind of partnership that we already had in North Kent. The need was for TGKP to focus its efforts on the major issues such as London Paramount, the work going on at KMEP and SELEP, including the exciting new ideas for a Skills Commission, the wider debate on infrastructure priorities in the Thames Gateway, the devolution agenda and the relationship with London;
 - even if the review did not go ahead there was value in getting the views of the private sector members as proposed in the paper; and strengthening the business/private sector voice on the TGKP Board; and also in learning more about best practice elsewhere through, for example, inviting those with experience from other parts of the country to come and present to the Board.
- 6.3. Summing up the discussion, **the Chairman said it was the clear decision of the Board that the review should not proceed.** This was a positive re-endorsement of the Partnership. However, it **was also agreed** that the Chairman should hold a meeting with private sector members to gather their views on the Partnership and that opportunities should be sought to learn lessons from elsewhere. **ACTION: Rob Bennett to hold a meeting with Private-Sector Board members to gather their views. TGKP team and members to look for opportunities to bring examples to the Board of best practice in partnership working from other parts of the country.**

Work Plan - TGKP(15)16

- 6.4. David Liston-Jones introduced the draft Work Plan, which was in a similar format to those produced in previous years. David invited comments on the Work Plan either at the meeting, or by email afterwards. **The draft Work Plan was agreed** subject to any detailed comments. **ACTION: Board members to email David Liston-Jones with any detailed comments.**
7. **Item 8: Updates on current issues from members, including HCA update –** paper TGKP(15)17.
- 7.1. The Chairman referred the Board to the HCA Update paper which was for information. **Paper TGKP(15)17 was noted.**
- 7.2. There were no general updates from members.
8. **Item 9: Budget Report –** Paper TGKP(15)18
- 8.1. David Liston-Jones introduced the Budget Report, which was by way of information. There would be a substantive discussion of the Partnership's budget and funding at the December Board meeting. **The Budget Report was noted.**
9. **Item 10: AOB**
- 9.1. There being no other business, the meeting finished at 16:50.

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

October 2015