
Approved Minutes of the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Board Meeting
held in the Darwin Room, Innovation Centre Medway, from 10.00am to 12noon on
Wednesday 17 June 2015

Board Members and Observers Present:

Rob Bennett, BBP Regeneration (Chair)
Cllr Andrew Bowles, Swale Borough Council
Cllr John Cubitt, Gravesham Borough Council
Ross Gill, Kent County Council (in place of Cllr Mark Dance)
Graham Harris, Dartford Borough Council (in place of Cllr Jeremy Kite)
Cllr Alan Jarrett, Medway Council
Ann Komzolik, North West Kent College
Naisha Polaine, Homes and Communities Agency

Also Present:

Neil Davies, Medway Council
Abdool Kara, Swale Borough Council
David Liston-Jones, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Richard Longman, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Linda Searle, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

Apologies:

Kamal Aggarwal, Thomson Snell and Passmore
Professor Tom Barnes, University of Greenwich
Cllr Rodney Chambers, Medway Council
Rehman Chishti, Member of Parliament
Cllr Mark Dance, Kent County Council
Robert Goodman, Bluewater
David Hughes, Gravesham Borough Council
Cllr Jeremy Kite, Dartford Borough Council
Iain McNab, Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)
Andrew Pearce/Richard Penn, Environment Agency
David Smith, Kent County Council
James Speck, Kent Science Park
Paul Whittlesea, Department for Communities and Local Government

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1. The Chairman welcomed attendees, in particular Cllr John Cubitt, the new Leader of Gravesham Borough Council, who was attending his first meeting, and Cllr Alan Jarrett, the new Leader of Medway Council. Cllr Jarrett said that Cllr Rodney Chambers would continue to be Medway Council's representative on TGKP, although he hoped to attend Board meetings from time to time. Rodney Chambers was unable to be at today's meeting as he was on annual leave.
- 1.2. Apologies were recorded.

2. Item 2: Minutes of TGKP Board Meeting on 24 February 2015 and Matters Arising

2.1. The minutes of the 24 February 2015 meeting **were agreed**. On matters arising:

2.1.1. Para 3.6, ongoing - the issue of possible ring-fencing of receipts from the sale of HCA's Kent and Medway assets for investment in Kent and Medway. The action was for work to be done after the Election to marshal the case to put before Government. The AECOM Growth and Infrastructure Framework report would be an important input into this work. **ACTION: Review once AECOM study became available.** [Note: KCC reported later in the meeting that the AECOM report was being finalised and would be circulated in early July.]

2.1.2. Para 4.2, Actioned - Rob Bennett had written to Dr Abdulla Al-Humaidi, Director of LRCH, in April and a note on the latest position, including a copy of the letter, was included in the Chief Executive's report.

2.1.3. Para 5.3, TGKP review was on the Agenda.

2.1.4. Para 6.3, Actioned – TGKP's letter responding to the Government consultation on 'Building more homes on brownfield land' had been revised and issued.

2.1.5. Para 7.4, Actioned – access to finance for business from 2015-16. Ross Gill had produced a revised paper for 5 March TIGER Strategic Board as requested. However, the nature of future access to finance arrangements across Kent and Medway, and how they would operate, had still to be agreed and would be discussed at the next TIGER Strategic Board meeting due to be held on 28 July 2015.

2.1.6. Para 9.1, Actioned – the visit by Penny Mordaunt MP, the former Thames Gateway Minister, had gone well. David Liston-Jones informed the Board that the new Thames Gateway Minister was Mark Francois MP and that there was likely to be a meeting of the Thames Gateway Strategic Group (TGSG) in September. Rob Bennett had written to the Minister on behalf of TGKP welcoming him to his new role, and inviting him to visit North Kent. David said that he understood the Minister hoped to make visits to North Kent and South Essex soon after the TGSG meeting had taken place. An update on Thames Gateway matters, together with a copy of the Chairman's letter to the new Minister, was in the Chief Executive's Report. In discussion, it was suggested that it would be useful if Sir Edward Lister, as Chair of the Strategic Group, wrote to the Minister in advance of the next TGSG meeting. **ACTION: David L-J to liaise with the TGSG secretariat on preparation of a draft letter from TGSG Chair to the Thames Gateway Minister.**

2.1.7. Para 9.3. Actioned – TGKP had responded saying that it was content with the proposal to change of name to North Kent College.

3. Item 3: Outcome of General and Local Elections

- 3.1. The Chairman invited the local authority members to update the Board on the outcome of the Local and Parliamentary elections in their areas. In the local council elections, there had been a change in political control at Gravesham where the Conservative Party had taken control from Labour, with Cllr Cubitt as the new leader of the Council. The Conservatives had retained control of Medway Council, and of Swale and Dartford Borough Councils. In the Parliamentary Elections, existing MPs had retained their seats with the exception of Rochester and Strood where Kelly Tolhurst had regained the seat for the Conservative Party from Mark Reckless (UKIP). Helen Whately had been elected as new Conservative MP for the Faversham and mid-Kent constituency (although the constituency was outside the Thames Gateway area, it nevertheless included part of North Kent).
- 3.2. **The Board noted the outcome of the elections** and the Chairman thanked the local authority Leaders and representatives for their contributions.
4. **Item 4: Issues to be discussed at forthcoming KMEP meeting, including future of the South East LEP – Ross Gill, Kent County Council (papers tabled at the meeting)**
- 4.1. Ross Gill tabled a set of papers for the KMEP meeting taking place on 22 June. This included a draft business case for the establishment of a Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership, in place of the existing South East LEP. Ross had also prepared a short paper for the TGKP Board that summarised the draft business case, and the recommendations being made to the KMEP Board.
- 4.2. The draft business case noted that Kent and Medway was a coherent economic geography, already co-terminus with the boundaries for a range of other institutions. There was a need for a stronger, locally-relevant partnership to plan for the future to unlock Kent and Medway's growth opportunities. The draft case therefore proposed the establishment of a Kent and Medway LEP based on the existing Kent and Medway Economic Partnership.
- 4.3. Ross said that this TGKP meeting provided a timely opportunity for the Board to consider and comment on the draft case in advance of the KMEP meeting.
- 4.4. In discussion, members argued in support of the proposal for the establishment of a Kent and Medway LEP. The following points were also made:
- it was important to seek to build support for the proposal, including from local MPs;
 - whilst there would clearly be a requirement for some transitional arrangements, doubts were expressed over the need for the continuation of the SEFUND vehicle;
 - business representatives in Kent and Medway were supportive of the proposal for a Kent and Medway LEP, and Ann Komzolik said that there was also support from a Further Education perspective;

- it would be important for the role of TGKP and the other sub-county partnerships to be recognised, and incorporated from the outset into the governance arrangements for the new LEP.
- 4.5. **The Chairman** thanked members for their comments. The Board clearly supported the proposal for a Kent and Medway LEP. **ACTION: It was agreed** that members should forward any further comments through to Ross in advance of the KMEP meeting.
5. **ITEM 5: Chairman’s letter to Department for Transport on rail capacity in North Kent, including Crossrail extension – Paper TGKP(15)9**
- 5.1. The Chair asked Richard Longman to introduce his paper. Richard said that the Chairman had written to the Department of Transport on 24 April emphasising the Partnership’s concern that transport accessibility and capacity in North Kent should be looked at holistically, rather than in a compartmentalised way. The letter had requested engagement with Government and had included an offer of joint working. A copy of the letter was attached to the paper.
- 5.2. Richard said that since the paper was written, a reply had been received from Allison Phillips at the Department for Transport, and this had been circulated to the Board. Although the Department’s letter provided a summary of the work being done by Government, it had not responded on the request for engagement with partners, nor on the offer of joint working. Richard sought the Board’s views on the Department’s letter.
- 5.3. Following a brief discussion, **it was agreed** that the Department’s reply had not sufficiently addressed our fundamental concern that issues were being considered in a compartmentalised way, nor our request for engagement. Now that the election was over, and Ministers had been appointed, **it was agreed** that the Chairman should write again, this time at Ministerial level. **ACTION: TGKP team to draft letter for the Chairman’s approval for him to send to Secretary of State for Transport.**
- 5.4. Richard also reported to the Board that, as a result of being copied in to the original letter, TGKP had been approached by Transport for London with an offer to come and meet the Chairman to explain TfL’s ideas on devolution of rail services. In discussion it was argued that the offer of a meeting should be accepted, not just so that we could gain a better understanding of TfL’s plans, but also because it would provide an opportunity to inform TfL about TGKP’s priorities in North Kent. It was agreed that it would be important to liaise closely with the relevant officers at KCC (Stephen Gasche) on the arrangements for any meeting. It was also agreed that North Kent local authorities be invited to send representatives, and that the London Borough of Bexley should be invited to attend. **ACTION: TGKP team to make arrangements for meeting with TfL. Ross Gill to contact Stephen Gasche at KCC.**
6. **ITEM 6: Partnership matters including review of TGKP – paper TGKP(15)10 and Board membership.**
- 6.1. **Review of TGKP** - The Chair invited Richard Longman to introduce his paper which examined the scope, timing and method for the proposed review of TGKP. Richard reminded members that the Board had agreed at

last year's AGM that a review should be carried out after the General and local elections had taken place. He explained that the Officers' Group had considered the issue at its May and June meetings and this paper reflected the Group's views. The Officers' Group had concluded that whilst it was right that there should be a fundamental look at the role and function of TGKP, the review should not be about the existence of the partnership itself. Rather it should be about what the partnership should do and how it was set up to deliver.

- 6.2. Richard went on to explain that the proposed scope of the review was set out in Annex 1 to the paper. On timing, the Officers' Group's recommendation to the Board was that the review be deferred until the Autumn when, amongst other things, institutional arrangements, notably the shape of the Local Enterprise Partnership, would be clearer.
- 6.3. The Officers' Group had also considered the process for carrying out the review. Annex 1 suggested a number of ways the review might be conducted. These included a review by a team of officers eg Regeneration Directors, interviews and/or workshops with an external facilitator, Peer Review eg under the auspices of the LGA, an assurance review conducted through Local Partnerships, and the commissioning of external consultants. The Officers' Group had reservations about the assurance review approach; such reviews tended to focus on issues of governance and performance whereas the key objective for this review was to secure agreement and clarity on the purpose and future role and remit of the Partnership.
- 6.4. Finally, the paper invited the Board to agree the broad scope of the review, agree that the review take place in the Autumn and advise on its preferred method for conducting the review.
- 6.5. In discussion, the following points were made:
 - the scope of the review, as set out in Annex 1, looked broadly on the right lines. Whilst the focus should be on the purpose and role of the partnership, we should not shy away from examining the performance of the partnership;
 - it was right to defer the review until the Autumn;
 - there was a variety of views expressed on the process for undertaking the review. A peer review by the LGA or an assurance review by Local Partnerships was not favoured. There were also mixed views expressed on the merits of commissioning external consultants, and on the costs involved;
 - it would be helpful to seek a view from the private sector Board members who were not able to be present at today's meeting – we should ensure that there was a business/private sector input into the review;
 - as a first step it would be useful to carry out a self assessment;
- 6.6. Summing up the Board's discussion the Chairman said that **the Board agreed:**

- the scope of the review, as set out in Annex 1, was on broadly the right lines;
 - the review should be deferred until the Autumn when the wider strategic institutional issues were clearer, especially the future of the South East LEP;
 - further work needed to be done on the most appropriate process for the review, though it was agreed that a self-assessment should be undertaken; and
 - we needed to obtain the views of the private sector Board members.
- 6.7. **Action: The Officers' Group to do further work on the options for conducting the review and come back to the Board with proposals in the Autumn. In the meantime the Group should set in motion a self-assessment process. The Chairman undertook to consult with the private sector Board members to seek their views.**
- 6.8. **Board Membership** – David Liston-Jones said that there was a number of membership issues to be discussed:
- **Ebbfleet Development Corporation (EDC).** The Officers' Group was recommending to the Board that, as the EDC had now been formally established, the Corporation should be invited to become a member of the Board (and of the Officers' Group). Following a brief discussion, it was proposed that the Corporation should be invited to become a member, rather than an observer, and that, as a public sector member, should be invited to make a financial contribution to the partnership's costs when the issue of contributions was next considered. This was, of course, subject to whatever proposals for future funding might flow from the review of TGKP in the Autumn. **The Board agreed** that the EDC be invited to become a member of the Partnership's Board on this basis. **Action: David Liston-Jones to pursue with Robin Cooper, the Corporation's new Chief Executive, and to arrange for the invitation to be issued.**
 - **Retirement of Professor Tom Barnes, University of Greenwich, and David Simms. Lafarge Tarmac.** The Board was informed that Tom Barnes and David Simms had both now retired. **It was agreed** that HE representation on the Board was important and that the University of Greenwich be invited to identify a replacement for Professor Barnes. It was argued that it was important to have strong business representation on the Board. **It was agreed** that Lafarge Tarmac should be approached to see if they wished to retain their place on the Board. **The Chairman said** that he knew he spoke for the whole Board in thanking Tom and David for their support and participation in the Board's work over the years, and he would write to them to put on record the Board's thanks. **This was agreed. Action: Chairman to write to Professor Tom Barnes and David Simms. David Liston-Jones to follow-up the issue of new representatives with the University of Greenwich and with Lafarge Tarmac.**
 - **MP representation:** In the General Election, Rehman Chishti had been

re-elected as MP for Gillingham and Rainham, and so would continue as a TGKP Board member, subject to him confirming he was willing to do so. It was suggested that there would also be value in seeking Rehman's views on how we could improve the Partnership's engagement with North Kent MPs more generally. **Action: Neil Davies and David Liston-Jones to arrange to meet with Rehman Chishti MP.**

7. Item 7: Updates on current issues from members, including HCA update – paper TGKP(15)11.

7.1. The Chairman referred the board to the HCA Update paper which was for information. **Paper TGKP(15)11 was noted.**

7.2. The Chairman invited updates from Board members. The Board received updates on a number of issues and schemes, including Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne Town Centre development, Rochester Airport, and Lodge Hill.

8. Item 8: Chief Executive's Report – paper TGKP(15)12

8.1. David Liston-Jones said that the report was largely for information. He drew Members' attention to the item on the TGKP Summer Business Breakfast meeting on 14 July. Any members who wished to attend who had not already booked a place should contact the TGKP team as soon as possible, as only a limited number of places remained. **The Chief Executive's Report was noted.**

9. Item 9: Budget Report

9.1. David Liston-Jones introduced the Budget Report. **The Board noted the position on income and expenditure for 2014/2015.** David invited the Board to approve an initial budget for 2015/2016 of £264,231, as set out in the third column of the schedule attached to the paper. **The initial budget for 2015/2016 was approved.**

10. Item 10: AOB

10.1. David Liston-Jones and Abdool Kara drew the meeting's attention to an invitation from Climate Ready for a local authority, or group of authorities, to take part in TASC – Targeted Adaptation Support for Councils – an initiative offering support on adaptation to climate change. Following a brief discussion **it was agreed that TGKP would submit a coordinated EoI on behalf of North Kent authorities – subject to checking first with KCC that there was no county-wide submission being made. Action: David Liston-Jones/Ross Gill to check with KCC, and then David to coordinate North Kent EoI.**

10.2. There being no other business, the meeting finished at 12:05

Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

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