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**Approved Minutes of the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Board Meeting**  
held in the Darwin Room, Innovation Centre Medway, from 2.30pm to 4.50pm on  
**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

**Board Members and Observers Present:**

Kamal Aggarwal, Thomson Snell and Passmore  
Rob Bennett, BBP Regeneration (Chair)  
Cllr Andrew Bowles, Swale Borough Council  
Cllr John Burden, Gravesham Borough Council  
Cllr Rodney Chambers, Medway Council  
Cllr Jeremy Kite, Dartford Borough Council  
Ann Komzolik, North West Kent College  
David Simms, Lafarge Tarmac

**Also Present:**

Barbara Cooper, Kent County Council  
Robin Cooper, Medway Council  
Neil Davies, Medway Council  
Mark Davis, Department for Communities and Local Government  
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  
Jonathan Sadler, Homes & Communities Agency (for Naisha Polaine)

**Apologies:**

Professor Tom Barnes, University of Greenwich  
Rehman Chishti MP  
Mark Dance, Kent County Council  
Robert Goodman, Bluewater/Lend Lease  
Andrew Pearce, Environment Agency  
Naisha Polaine, Homes and Communities Agency  
Linda Searle, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership  
James Speck, Kent Science Park  
Paul Whittlesea, DCLG

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1. The Chairman opened the meeting, in particular welcoming Mark Davis (Ebbsfleet Team Leader, DCLG) for item 3, and Robin Cooper (Medway Council) for item 4.

## 2. Minutes of Board Meeting on 18 February and Special Board meeting on 11 March, and Matters Arising

2.1. The minutes of the 18 February Board Meeting were agreed. On Matters Arising:

- David Liston-Jones reported that the visit by Graham Pendlebury, Department for Transport, to North Kent had taken place on 25 April. David thanked colleagues who had assisted with the tour. Graham had found the visit very useful.
- James Speck had been informed of the Board's agreement to his appointment as a Board member and a very positive introductory meeting had taken place with James, Rob Bennett and Andrew Bowles. The arrangements for confirming his appointment were currently being finalised.
- The Chairman reiterated the request for Members to suggest agenda items for future meetings. **Action: All.**

2.2. The minutes of the 11 March Special Board Meeting were agreed. The actions had been followed up via the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership.

## 3. Discussion on Ebbsfleet Garden City and the setting up of the Urban Development Corporation – introduction by Mark Davis, Ebbsfleet Team Leader, Department for Communities and Local Government

3.1. The Chairman invited Mark Davis to introduce the discussion and give a DCLG perspective on the Ebbsfleet Garden City. He referred to the Chancellor's announcement including proposals for up to 15,000 homes and commitment of up to £200 million for enabling infrastructure. The Government's aim was to accelerate the pace of delivery and raise quality: a Garden City should be cohesive and have its own distinctive feel. The Urban Development Corporation should be in place by the first quarter of 2015, but they wanted to maintain momentum ahead of this. The Department was currently recruiting a Chair, and hoping to appoint in the summer. A Delivery Board was bringing together local authorities and various Whitehall Departments including HM Treasury, Defra and the Department for Transport. This Board was looking at UDC powers and boundaries (which would be consulted upon).

3.2. Lessons learned from past UDCs suggested the need for focus rather than breadth. The Department recognised the importance and the implications of the London Paramount proposals, and the associated NSIP process: the UDC would need to work with this. DCLG was keen that the Garden City concept was given a fresh twist for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and set in the North Kent context, with emphasis on good quality design, green space and employment as well as housing, and using technology to enable new models of living and working.

3.3. Mark said DCLG was keen to understand the critical infrastructure priorities and to know North Kent partners' views about how DCLG could help.

- 3.4. Jeremy Kite and John Burden welcomed the Garden City announcement. To date they were content that the Government's approach was genuinely involving and that democratic principles would be enshrined in the UDC model. Maximising the potential of HS1 was critical. Ministers needed to back the London Paramount proposals. The UDC's approach should not be housing-driven, but about creating a vibrant, living place with quality expressed through every aspect. John Burden emphasised the need to include affordable housing and provide for a full social mix.
- 3.5. Barbara Cooper voiced KCC's support for the Garden City proposal. It was important to clarify that the £200 million was exclusive of the resources channelled through the SELEP/Local Growth Fund. There ought to be scope for local authority secondments into the UDC, but it was vital to ensure the right skills mix.
- 3.6. Andrew Bowles stressed that there could also be a role for TGKP to assist with the UDC, which would help safeguard Medway's and Swale's legitimate interests in the Garden City. David Simms was very positive about progress to date and in particular the close engagement from Whitehall.
- 3.7. **The Chairman** summarised by reiterating the importance of employment in shaping the Garden City, and the need for the strategic sub-regional (North Kent) dimension to be factored in. Ebbsfleet remained TGKP's top spatial priority. He thanked Mark Davis for his helpful and informative presentation to the Board.

#### **4. TGKP submission to Airports Commission – paper TGKP(14)9**

- 4.1. Robin Cooper introduced paper TGKP(14)9 and outlined the approach that Medway and other Kent authorities were taking in responding to the Airports Commission. Heathrow and Gatwick had both made highly-publicised submissions on 13 May. Kent Leaders, with the exception of Tunbridge Wells, were writing in opposition to an Inner Estuary Airport.
- 4.2. The focus of the evidence being submitted by TGKP was around (un)deliverability, particularly the housing and infrastructure needed to support the anticipated number of jobs. Medway and Kent had commissioned a ComRes survey which showed little support for an Estuary Airport linked to closure of Heathrow. A 'Chatham House' seminar bringing experts together estimated the cost would exceed £120 billion, several times the cost of expanding Gatwick or Heathrow. The private sector was generally reluctant to go on record as supporting or opposing particular options, but it was worth noting that 202 out of the biggest 250 companies in the UK were within 50 miles of Heathrow. Some had indicated that if they had to relocate from Heathrow it would not necessarily be within the UK.
- 4.3. In commenting on the draft TGKP submission, Board members were keen to see reference to how an Inner Estuary Airport could impact negatively on Paramount and Ebbsfleet Garden City, but also the need for better connectivity between North Kent and the preferred options at Heathrow and Gatwick. Other issues included the risk of bird strikes, citing the Hudson River case. Abdool Kara queried whether there were lessons to

be learned from precedents abroad e.g. in Japan and Hong Kong, where airports had been built in proximity to wildlife habitats. Board Members were supportive of additional runway capacity, and even a hub airport, but the extortionate cost of the Estuary option, its undeliverability, together with the other objections, meant it should be ruled out.

- 4.4. Subject to reflecting these observations in the final submission, the **recommendations set out in paragraph 8 of the paper were agreed.** The Board authorised the Chairman to submit a revised document to the Commission by the 23 May deadline. **Action: Richard Longman / Robin Cooper.**

**5. Kent Centre for Offshore Renewable Engineering (CORE) – Possible Reconfiguration – paper TGKP(14)10**

- 5.1. Richard Longman introduced paper TGKP(14)10. SELEP's growth deal bid included an ask for Harwich to be granted CORE status. BIS had responded suggesting that the Kent CORE should be reconfigured to include Harwich and Brightlingsea. There were both pros and cons to this proposal; officers felt they had not yet seen evidence from Essex colleagues of the additionality this would bring to the Kent CORE. On balance, there could be some positive benefits particularly if Harwich's role as a construction port in close proximity to the East Anglia Zone were seen as complementary to the potential for manufacturing in the Medway Superhub. The main point of concern was whether Harwich would be competing with the Medway ports as a site for manufacturing. It was unclear at present whether the asset holders – notably Hutchison, who own Thamesport as well as Harwich – supported this approach. The preferred handling was to agree in principle to reconfiguration subject to establishing that it had the support of asset holders.
- 5.2. Board Members were not convinced that reconfiguration to include Harwich and Brightlingsea would complement the existing Kent CORE offer. There were many unanswered questions. Members expressed concern that reconfiguration could dilute rather than complement the CORE offer in Kent and Medway. It was not clear how Kent and Medway companies would benefit if manufacturing or other offshore wind activity were to go to Harwich. Nor was it clear how to handle competition within the CORE whilst trying to market the CORE as an holistic offer. We would need to know more about the commercial offer to understand how it would be promoted most effectively. From a TGKP perspective, we wanted to see commitment of resources to the CORE from the LEP and from BIS at a national level.
- 5.3. The Chairman summarised by saying that whilst these questions remained unanswered the Board was not ready to support the proposal. The Board was open to persuasion, and it was proposed, and agreed, that Essex colleagues be invited to come and meet with TGKP to present their case and to discuss what additionality the reconfiguration would bring to the Kent CORE. Richard would be meeting representatives, with colleagues from KCC and LiK, on 19<sup>th</sup> May and would put these points in seeking to shape any paper that is put to the SELEP Board on 30<sup>th</sup> May. **Action: Richard Longman.**

## **6. SELEP Strategic Plan/Local Growth Fund bid – Paper TGKP(14)11**

- 6.1. David LJ introduced paper TGKP(14)11. North Kent's priorities were well represented in SELEP's Strategic Economic Plan, and in the prioritisation of projects that each of the federated areas had been asked to carry out. Nationally the available funds were heavily oversubscribed, and these were mainly capital with hardly any revenue. The extent of local discretion was unclear or what conditions Government would attach to allocations.
- 6.2. Ross Gill elaborated with reference to the work done through KMEP and feedback through SELEP. Total funds were likely to be reduced as money had been allocated to HCA programmes; the extent of prescription could vary from LEP to LEP depending on the strength of evidence supporting growth deal bids.
  - 6.2.1. Transport projects comprised about 75% of funding bids: business cases were requested from transport leads by 16 May.
  - 6.2.2. On skills (SFA capital), the expectation was that funds would closely follow SFA priorities, with some localisation of their processes rather than devolution to LEPs.
  - 6.2.3. Access to finance was being treated as a capital item: the high priority given to it by SELEP/KMEP reflected the strength of business sector support.
  - 6.2.4. On land and property, the Government view on the SEFUND model was awaited; more detail had been requested on individual projects – a problematic request as the intention was that there would be a call for projects once SEFUND was established. However, KCC were collecting more detail on those projects ready to start in 2015/16 (on the same timetable as for transport schemes).
- 6.3. Ross Gill said that to ensure priorities going forward to SELEP and Government had KMEP endorsement, the proposals would be circulated to KMEP members ahead of the SELEP Board on 30<sup>th</sup> May.
- 6.4. There followed a brief discussion on the conditions that might be attached to the Government's announcement, whether there would be management by central Government on a project-by-project basis, and what flexibility there might be for local partners to reprioritise.
- 6.5. Summing up the discussion, the Chairman emphasised the need for all relevant interests – landowners, developers, builders, local authority departments etc – to be ready to move swiftly to get whatever projects were chosen underway as quickly as possible.

## **7. Updates on current issues from members**

- 7.1. John Burden advised that the s.106 agreement for the Heritage Quarter had been concluded and work should start on site this autumn.
- 7.2. Barbara Cooper reported that a significant number of TIGER-funded businesses were exhibiting at Kent 2020 and connections between them were being made via High Growth Kent. We should use case studies of

successful TIGER applicants at our business breakfast to get the message over about the opportunity for funding growth.

- 7.3. Robin Cooper reported progress on Rochester Riverside: phase 2 had been let and strong interest was being shown in phases 3 and 4, catalysed by the prospect of the relocated Rochester station opening in 2015.

## **8. Chief Executive's Report – paper TGKP(14)12**

- 8.1. David introduced the Chief Executive's report. This covered a number of items not on the agenda:

- TGKP was hosting its Summer Business Breakfast on 17 June
- HCA had recently launched three schemes to support and accelerate/unlock housing sites: the Large Sites Infrastructure Programme (1500 units plus); the Local Growth Fund (Housing Infrastructure) (250 to 1500 units); and the Builders Finance Fund (15 to 250 units). Board members were urged to encourage bids from potential candidates: the deadlines were tight.
- The new Assisted Areas Map had been submitted to the EU including the Medway-Swale Arc. Confirmation was awaited from the European Commission [the approval was subsequently published on 21 May].
- Sir Edward Lister had written to the Minister on behalf of TGSG about unlocking key development sites. A response was still awaited and the date of the next TGSG meeting still to be fixed. [The Minister's reply, dated 20<sup>th</sup> May, is attached to these minutes.]

## **9. Budget Report – paper TGKP(14)13**

- 9.1. David introduced the budget report seeking the Board's approval for the initial budget of £287,260. This budget would exceed the anticipated income and would therefore involve drawing down from the surplus. There was scope to adjust the activities budget: the proposed provision covers the existing commitments on the CORE project and potential for a similar level of investment in further project(s). The Board approved the initial budget for 2014/2015.

## **10. AOB**

- 10.1. None

**Thames Gateway Kent Partnership**

**June 2014**