



Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

AGM

Approved minutes of the **14th Thames Gateway Kent Partnership Annual General Meeting** held in Darwin Room, Innovation Centre Medway, 2.30pm on **Tuesday 18 November 2014**.

Present:

Board members and observers:

Rob Bennett, BBP Regeneration (Chair)
Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader, Swale Borough Council
Cllr John Burden, Leader, Gravesham Borough Council
Mark Dance, Cabinet Member, Kent County Council
Neil Davies, Medway Council
Ann Komzolik, North West Kent College
Naisha Polaine, Homes and Communities Agency
James Speck, Kent Science Park

Also present:

Barbara Cooper, Kent County Council
David Hughes, Gravesham Borough Council
David Liston-Jones, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Richard Longman, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Iain McNab, Business Innovation and Skills
Pete Raine, Swale Borough Council
Linda Searle, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

Apologies:

Kamal Aggarwal, Thomson, Snell and Passmore
Professor Tom Barnes, University of Greenwich
Cllr Rodney Chambers, Leader, Medway Council
Rehman Chishti, Member of Parliament
Ross Gill, Kent County Council
David Godfrey, South East LEP
Robert Goodman, Lend Lease
Graham Harris, Dartford Borough Council
Abdool Kara, Swale Borough Council
Cllr Jeremy Kite, Leader Dartford Borough Council
Andrew Pearce, Environment Agency
David Simms, Lafarge Tarmac

Item 1: Welcome, Apologies and Matters Arising from the Minutes of the 13th Annual General Meeting held on 29 November 2013

1. The Chairman welcomed the Board to the 14th AGM. An ordinary Board meeting would follow on from this AGM.
2. The Chairman welcomed Iain McNab from BIS to the meeting. He also welcomed Pete Raine who was standing in for Abdool Kara.
3. The Minutes of the AGM held on 29 November 2013 had been previously agreed at the Board meeting held on 18 February 2014.
4. Matters arising:

Paragraph 14: Actioned - James Speck, Kent Science Park, had been appointed as TGKP's new private sector Board member.

Item 2: Report from Chairman - paper TGKP(14)19

5. The Chairman introduced his Annual Report and began by thanking all Board members, and their advisers, for their positive and constructive contributions to the Partnership's work over the year. This had taken place not just in the TGKP Board meetings, but also at the TGK Officers' Group, in the TIGER Strategic Board, and in many other ad hoc meetings and, as in previous years, he was very grateful for the continued commitment and effort shown by everyone.
6. The Chairman commented that the confidence and positive outlook he reported last year for business had continued; he had seen this through his own business contacts and it was reflected in the economic data. From September 2012 to September 2014 the number of Job Seekers Allowance claimants in North Kent had seen a significant reduction of more than 39%, from 14,592 to 8862. Business growth, in terms of numbers of businesses, had been stronger in North Kent than in the rest of the South East.
7. This confidence was not surprising given the exciting plans for North Kent. March 2014 had seen the Government's announcement of a new Garden City at Ebbsfleet backed by an Urban Development Corporation and £200million of funding for infrastructure. During the year, the plans for London Paramount had gathered pace with the latest consultation from the scheme's promoters launched this month.
8. The Chairman reported other key events since the last AGM. These included the Davies' Commission's decision in September not to shortlist the proposals for an Estuary Airport, and the Government's decision at the end of last year to drop Option B from the list of possible options for the Lower Thames Crossing, which the Chairman felt sure had been partly in response to the views expressed by local partners, including this Partnership.

Partnership Highlights

9. In terms of the Partnership's work, the Chairman drew attention to a number of highlights this year. For example:

- we had worked hard to ensure the Partnership's investment priorities for North Kent were reflected in the **South East LEP's Strategic Economic Plan and Growth Deal**, including holding a special additional Board meeting in March. In the event, £44million of Local Growth fund resources were allocated to transport schemes in North Kent;
- alongside and working in support of the local authorities directly involved, we had liaised closely with DCLG on the emerging proposals for the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, including responding to the Government's recent consultation to ensure the wider interests of North Kent were fully taken into account;
- the Partnership's **revised Plan for Growth**, drafted by Richard Longman, had been launched at the TGKP Summer business breakfast event in June;
- the twice-yearly TGKP **business breakfast** meetings were now well established. These were becoming increasingly popular – the event in June had over 80 businesses attending – and were an important way for us to keep in touch with the business community. The next business breakfast was being held on 10 December. The invitations had been issued a couple of days ago and already over 60 requests for places have been received by the TGKP office;
- in October we sponsored and exhibited at the **North Kent B2B** event in Gravesend. The seminar TGKP ran highlighting the plans for Ebbsfleet Garden City and London Paramount was full to capacity, demonstrating the interest there was in these new developments amongst the business community. This was only one of a number of business events during the year in which TGKP took part either as a speaker or as an exhibitor;
- the **TIGER loan scheme** was very active throughout the year and 49 businesses had so far been helped through the fund. The Chairman said he was very grateful to all concerned, and in particular to Mark Dance as chair of the North Kent Approvals Panel, and to Jacqui Ward and her programme management team at KCC. Although it had been hoped the TIGER programme would receive further funding from BIS, we had recently learned that, unfortunately, no further funding would be made available. Decisions were now being made on the handling of applications to the fund. However, what the programme had already achieved was really encouraging;
- we had put the Partnership's **views robustly to Government** and to others on topics ranging from Assisted Areas status for the Medway-Swale Arc, now confirmed, through to airports capacity in the South East;
- the Partnership had led and funded an important project to support development of the **Offshore Wind manufacturing** industry. The Chairman commented that this was just the kind of action – specific support to encourage growth in a key industry sector – that he was keen for the Partnership to

undertake. He hoped similar targeted initiatives to support other key sectors would be carried out in the future, particularly in the context of the development of London Paramount;

- the **Thames Gateway Strategic Group** had been less active this year, but the TGKP team had helped facilitate a positive TGSG meeting with the new Thames Gateway Minister, Penny Mordaunt MP, last month. She indicated that she was keen to do what she could to support Thames Gateway priorities within Government.

TGKP Board Membership

10. The Chairman confirmed that during the year James Speck, Director of the Kent Science Park had been appointed as TGKP's new private sector Board member. James' knowledge and understanding of the Life Science and other high tech industries at the Science Park brought valuable new expertise to the Board.
11. The other change during the year was that, following ownership changes at Bluewater, Robert Goodman now attended the Board as the representative of Land Securities Group PLC rather than Lend Lease. The Chairman said he was delighted that Robert had been able to remain on the Board and was pleased to welcome Land Securities as Board members.

Budget

12. On the budget, the Chairman said that TGKP's income for 2014/2015 was forecast to be £230,000. A budget had been set for the year of £287,260. Actual expenditure for the year would depend on how much of the discretionary activities budget was utilised. Actuals to date, and known commitments for the full year, amounted to £244,846. The excess of expenditure over in-year income could be accommodated through utilising some of the Partnership's accumulated reserve.
13. The Chairman said he was very grateful to the five local authorities for their financial support for the Partnership.
14. The Board had received regular budget monitoring reports and the Chairman said he was grateful to Medway Council for providing the financial services.

Legal and Human Resources Support

15. The Chairman thanked Medway Council for continuing to provide legal services and Swale Borough Council for providing HR support services to the Partnership.

TGKP Executive Team

16. There had been no changes to the TGKP team during the year and the Chairman thanked the whole team – David, Richard, and Linda - for their continued hard work and commitment.

Looking forward to 2015

17. The Chairman re-iterated there were exciting times ahead for North Kent. The pace of delivery was picking up and there were huge opportunities on the horizon. As in previous years, the challenge was to ensure we made the most of these opportunities for residents and businesses in North Kent.
18. The Chairman drew attention to the issues the Partnership would face over the next year, including:
 - the outcome of General and Local Elections in May would inevitably lead to new initiatives, programmes and other changes to which the Partnership must be ready to respond;
 - the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation would be established and we needed, as a partnership, to forge an effective and positive relationship with this important new body in North Kent;
 - similarly, we needed to continue to develop our relationship with KMEP and SELEP as these partnerships evolved, so as to ensure that North Kent had a clear voice and that the priority status of this growth area, part of the Thames Gateway, was recognised when it came to decisions on funding - both domestic funding and wider EU funding;
 - working with partners, and following the success of the TIGER scheme, we needed to put in place arrangements for recycling the TIGER loans as they were repaid, and seek additional new funding, so that we could continue to offer access to finance beyond March 2015 to businesses in North Kent wishing to grow and create jobs, and
 - finally, we needed to renew our efforts to develop and strengthen our links with the business community, through hosting and sponsoring events and through specific, structured interventions aimed at, for example, improving business support arrangements, supporting key industry sectors and strengthening supply chains.
19. The Chairman said it had again been a great privilege to serve as TGKP's Chairman in 2014 and thanked everyone for the help and support given to him over this time. Furthermore, he said he looked forward to working with everyone over the next year, which he felt sure would bring new and interesting challenges.
20. Cllr Andrew Bowles, on behalf of the Board, thanked Rob Bennett for all his hard work and commitment as TGKP Chairman during the year.

Item 3: Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman – paper by the Chief Executive TGKP(14)20

21. David Liston-Jones introduced the Elections paper and explained the requirement to elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the Board.
22. Chairman: Rob Bennett was nominated by Cllr Andrew Bowles and seconded by

Mark Dance. Rob Bennett was duly re-elected as Chairman of the Board.

23. Vice Chairman: Cllr Andrew Bowles was nominated by Mark Dance and seconded by Neil Davies. Cllr Andrew Bowles was duly re-elected as Vice Chairman of the Board.
24. David Liston-Jones went on to explain, as laid out in the Constitution, that it was also necessary to confirm the lead bodies for HR services, financial services and legal services and to approve the timetable for Board meetings for the next 12 months.
25. Lead Body for Employment of Staff: Cllr Andrew Bowles confirmed that Swale Borough Council was happy to continue to act as Employment Lead Body providing HR services for the Partnership. Swale Borough Council was duly reappointed as Lead Body for Employment of Staff.
26. Lead Body for Financial Services: Neil Davies confirmed Medway Council was content to continue to provide the financial, accountable body, and ICT services for the Partnership. Medway Council was duly reappointed as Lead Body for Financial Services. He also confirmed Medway Council was happy to continue to provide Legal Services to the Board and Medway Council was duly reappointed as Lead Body for Legal Services.
27. Future meetings of the Board would be held at 2.30-4.30pm on the dates previously circulated. All meetings would be held at the Innovation Centre Medway, Maidstone Road, Chatham:

Tuesday 24 February
Wednesday 13 May
Monday 21 September
Thursday 3 December

Item 4: Any Other Business

28. Cllr John Burden proposed that there should be a review of the need for the Partnership, and of its role, after the General Election and local elections next May. There were bound to be changes, both nationally and locally, following the elections. We needed to examine the functions and purpose of the Partnership. We needed confident that the Partnership's views would be heard and listened to, especially by Government, and so a review during June/July would be timely.
29. In discussion Board members agreed it would be sensible to carry out a review after the elections. By that time the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation would have been established, and it would be necessary to consider TGKP's role in the context of the establishment of this important new body in North Kent. It was argued that a key role for the Partnership in the future would be to ensure that local businesses were well placed to benefit from the supply chain opportunities created by London Paramount.

30. Summing up the discussion, the Chairman said **it was agreed** that a review of the function and need for the Partnership should be undertaken after the elections in May next year. **It was also agreed** that the issue be put on the agenda for discussion at the 13 May 2015 Board meeting, once the outcome of the elections was known, so that the Board could consider the nature and timing of the review (although it was recognised that any changes to TGKP's Board membership arising as a result of the elections may not have been finalised so soon after the election date). **Action: David Liston-Jones to include an item on the proposed review on the agenda for the 13 May Board meeting.**
31. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 3.00pm.